



Working Paper no.: 12/2005

Title: Availability criteria in 25 countries<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:**

This working paper, which is a follow-up on a similar one from 1998, presents the results from a survey on job availability rules for unemployed, which was carried out by the Ministry of Finance in the winter of 2003/2004. The survey covers availability rules for 25 countries including 7 new EU-countries. The results form the basis of a summary indicator, the purpose of which is to improve deeper and broader research on factors affecting structural unemployment.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks are devoted to those ministerial colleagues in the responding countries who answered the questionnaire. Thanks are also given to the secretariat of the EPC - Labour Market Working Group. The paper was presented the meeting of the LMWG on April 21. 2004, and has benefitted from comments from the members of the LMWG and ministerial colleagues in other participating countries.

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## 1. Introduction and summary

Labour market policy is based on different instruments, some of which are easier to quantify and compare than others. The purpose of the cross-country survey presented in this paper is to improve the knowledge of one of these instruments, which are difficult to measure, namely the availability criteria that unemployed must fulfil in order to be entitled to unemployment benefits.

Because of their complexity, availability criteria can be difficult to compare between countries. Furthermore, availability criteria and their influences on the level of structural unemployment are seldom treated explicitly in the empirical literature on labour market policy. The criteria are, however, suggested to play an important role in relation to the structures of the labour market and hence the development and level of structural unemployment.

On this basis, the development of a useful indicator illustrating the strictness of availability criteria in labour market policies, which could serve as input in econometric studies, seems appropriate.

This paper presents the results and methods behind the calculation of an indicator of the strictness of availability criteria in 25 countries. The paper is a follow up on a similar one from 1998.

Using the same method as in 1998, the basic idea has been to present an updated indicator which could serve as input to a more extensive econometric study on determinants of the level of structural unemployment, including the indicator of availability and a variety of other structural factors. The results of the empirical work are promising to the extent that the availability indicator is significant and with the expected sign, and it helps to explain variations in the structural unemployment level across countries and over time.

The Danish Ministry of Finance bases the results presented here on a questionnaire sent to 32 different countries in the winter of 2003/2004. The results of the survey are planned to be included in the Danish Medium Term Economic Survey, 2004, which will be published later this year.

Countries were asked to give a description of the rules related to the availability of unemployed and to add whether actual implementation diverted extensively from the formal rules. Since availability rules are often applied with some degree of discretion, it has not been possible in all cases to clarify most common practices. This survey therefore develops an indicator of the degree of strictness in the availability criteria in the 25 countries, primarily on the basis of the more formal set of rules in the labour market policy legislation.

Despite these limitations, it is hoped that the survey will advance the knowledge and understanding of legislation concerning availability criteria in other countries and hopefully provide inspiration for future policy design.

The survey includes other questions on the unemployment benefit system and active labour market policy. The responses on these questions confirm information gathered from other sources. Also a new part has been added – on the possibilities for supplementary unemployment benefits etc. This section requires further analysis.

The outline of this paper is as follows:

Section 2 gives a brief description of the role of availability criteria in labour market policies and hence the expected relations between the criteria and structures at the labour market. The method behind the calculation is described in section 3. Following, section 4 presents the indicator of the strictness of availability criteria in the 25 countries. Finally, section 5-7 presents some remarks.

## **2. The role of availability criteria in labour market policies**

Unemployment benefits are commonly conditioned by rules related to the availability of the unemployed. Accordingly, in order to be entitled to unemployment benefits, the unemployed must fulfil certain requirements on job search activity and be willing to accept “suitable” job offers or participate in active labour market programmes. The availability rules are often enforced through benefit sanctions. These sanctions include temporary reduction, suspension or permanent cessation of benefit payments.

The more specific content of the criteria, including the definition of “suitable” work, is often described in detail in each country’s labour market legislation. This set of complex rules on e.g. how long travel-to-work time or reduction in wages, the unemployed must be willing to accept when offered a job, makes it difficult to construct a consistent measure and compare the overall strictness of the availability rules among countries.

The empirical literature on labour market policy seldom separates and analyses the effect of availability rules on job search activity, and hence the relationship between availability rules, wage-setting behaviour, and the level of structural unemployment.

The implementation and enforcement of job availability criteria are, however, suggested to play an important role in relation to the structures of the labour market, even if the criteria are difficult to measure properly.

Through the enforcement of availability rules, the incentive for unemployed to search actively and take over jobs is secured and strengthened. In this way, availability rules help to ensure an adequate and effective labour force, and vacant jobs become easier to occupy. Hence more rigorous availability criteria might reduce overall wage-pressure and thereby reduce the level of structural unemployment.

On the other hand, severe demands on the availability of the unemployed might also raise the accession to labour market schemes with no or less requirements on the unemployed’s labour market behaviour, i.e. temporary or permanent retirement schemes, and hereby reduce the effective labour force.

By counteracting potential disincentive effects, availability criteria support the use of other labour market policy instruments. The length of the entitlement period and the benefit level might also influence job search behaviour. Hence, the criteria should be analysed with regard to the structure of the entire unemployment benefit system and active labour market policies.

More rigorous availability rules might have the same overall impact as a lowering of benefit levels, namely a strengthening of the unemployed’s incentive to search for work. But whereas stricter availability criteria only affect those, who do not comply with the sharper criteria, a lower benefit

level affect all beneficiaries. Compared to the effect of reducing the level of unemployment benefit, the use of availability criteria as a labour market policy instrument therefore has favourable distributional effects.

Since availability criteria work as a legitimisation of the entitlement to unemployment benefits, the criteria play an important role in the mix of instruments concerning the unemployed's rights and obligations. In interaction with other labour market policy instruments different balances can be struck between benefit levels, entitlement periods, and the strictness of the availability rules. For example, it might be possible to maintain a relatively high benefit level and long entitlement period without negative consequences on job incentives, if the availability rules are severe and well enforced.

The use of active labour market measures is also expected to influence the search behaviour of the unemployed. With respect to availability, the obligations to participate in job training or education also serve as a mean of testing the actual availability of the unemployed. In this way, there is a close connection between active labour market policies and the demands on availability.

The impact of the availability criteria on labour market outcome does, however, depend on the implementation and administration of the rules. Accordingly, this calls for a well-enforced system.

In this survey, it was attempted to treat the issue of implementation by asking the participating countries about the normal practice and whether practice deviates strongly from actual legislation. For example, in some countries the unemployed must be willing to move for work, but in practice this rule seems only to be applied in a few instances. It seems, that since the implementation of the rules are often subject to some degree of discretion by the authorities, it is very difficult to give an indication of the general practices.

This survey therefore develops an indicator of the degree of strictness in the availability criteria in 25 countries, primarily on the basis of the more formal set of rules in the labour market policy legislation.

### **3. Calculation of the indicator**

The indicator of strictness in the availability criteria are based on a questionnaire, send by the Ministry of Finance in Denmark to the present EU countries, the new EU countries and a few additional selected OECD countries in the winter of 2003/2004. The questions addressed the characteristics of the national unemployment benefit systems, the active labour market policies followed by a series of more specific questions concerning job availability criteria, cf. appendix 1. The final part of the questionnaire addressed questions concerning complementary benefits as vacation benefits and supplementary benefits.

Subsequently, 25 countries were included in the study; Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and USA. Compared to the questionnaire from 1997 there are 16 countries that have participated in both questionnaires (Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and USA), 9 new countries (Estonia, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania,

Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain), and 3 countries (Canada, New Zealand, and Luxembourg), which have only participated in 1997. The new countries consist primarily of the new EU countries.

The indicator is calculated on the same basis as the 1998-indicator, and thus has mainly been developed from answers to questions concerning the job availability (part C in questionnaire). Answers related to the unemployment system in general have, however, served to clarify and set the rules into a wider perspective of the entire unemployment system.

The indicator accounts for the following categories:

1. Demands on job search activity
2. Availability during ALMP
3. Participation in active labour market programmes
3. Occupational mobility
4. Geographical mobility
5. Extent of valid reasons for refusal of job offers
6. Benefit sanctions in case of self-induced resignation
7. Benefit sanctions in case of refusals without valid reasons
8. Benefit sanctions in case of repeated refusals

The indicator is constructed by dedicating 1 to 5 points to each of the 8 categories above according to the strictness of the rules. 5 points express maximum strictness. The categories are hereby given weights according to how strongly the demands are assumed to influence job availability.

The exact calculations are shown in table 1, whereas the rules and answers related to each country are given in the appendix.

### **Cf. 1. Demands on job search activity during the unemployment spell**

Whether the unemployed is in fact available for work during the unemployment spell can be tested in different ways.

In many countries the unemployed must renew his/her registration as a job seeker at given intervals.

In some countries the unemployed must provide evidence of job search and fulfil certain conditions on the number of applications. For example in most states in the United States, unemployed must show documentation on a weekly basis. Unemployed in the Netherlands must report every week on the way in which they have searched for jobs and the amount of job applications.

In other countries such as Ireland, evidence of job search is required during periodic reviews throughout the unemployment spell. In Denmark, availability is tested in connection with an activation offer. In Italy, there are currently no requirements on the job search activity.

In relation to the strictness of availability rules this criteria has been set on the basis of how often the unemployed should contact the Public Employment Service, and how extensive the demands on job search activity are.

## **Cf. 2. Demands on availability when the unemployed participates in active labour market policy programmes**

Demands on availability during participation in active labour market programmes are regarded as strict if the unemployed must overtake job offers, even though he/she is participating in subsidised work or training.

It appears, however, that these demands very often depend on the supply and structure of active labour market programmes (ALMPs) in each country. In some countries participants in active labour market programmes receive other allowances than unemployment benefits during activation and are therefore not regarded as unemployed and hence not obliged to be available at the labour market.

On the other hand, in the Scandinavian countries unemployed must accept job offers during participation in ALMPs. Normally, the unemployed is also obliged to search actively during participation.

The importance of this variable in an overall analysis of the functioning of the labour market will of course depend on the scope of active labour market policy in the respective countries.

## **Cf. 3. Occupational mobility and whether the rules change over the unemployment spell**

Determination of the demands concerning occupational mobility frequently relates to the unemployed's education and qualifications as well as the length of the unemployment spell. In some countries, such as Germany, the requirement on mobility is determined on the basis of remuneration. A job is regarded as suitable if the wage is up to 20 per cent less than the basis for assessment of the unemployment benefit.

In case the unemployed must accept all kind of jobs that he/she is capable of doing, the strictness of the rules will to some extent depend on the restrictions on job suitability, cf. the criterion on the extent of valid reasons for refusal below. This is not taken into consideration under this criterion. Accordingly, if the unemployed must accept all kinds of job offers that he/she is capable of doing, the availability rules are regarded as strict. This is the case in countries such as Denmark, Norway and Australia.

In countries where the qualifications or wages in the job offers are taken into consideration, rules are regarded as less strict.

Finally, in the remaining cases, the degree of strictness has been determined by the duration of the period before the unemployed in question must overtake job offers which are not necessarily in accordance with the unemployed's training and professional past and pay. The shorter the restricted period, the stricter the rules on occupational mobility.

In England the "permitted" period, where the job seekers can restrict their availability to their usual occupation and the rate of pay, they used to receive, lasts for between 1 and 13 weeks depending on the job seeker's experience in the occupation concerned and the location.

## **Cf. 4. Geographical mobility and whether the rules change over the unemployment spell**

Several countries lay down restrictions on how long transportation time to and from work the unemployed must be willing to accept in connection with a job offer. In a few instances, the time requirement is prolonged after a specific duration of the unemployment spell.

The demands on geographic mobility are regarded as stricter, the longer transportation time the unemployed must accept. In Sweden and Slovakia, the unemployed must be prepared to move to overtake job offers.

The determination of the strictness of rules related to geographical mobility does not take into account, that requirement on geographical mobility probably is constructed with regards to the infrastructure and size of the respective countries.

#### **Cf. 5. Valid reasons for rejecting a job offer or participation in an active labour market program**

This part of the indicator relates to the definition of “suitable” jobs in the different countries.

All countries have a list of valid reasons why a job offer can be refused or resigned from without consequences regarding benefit payments. The lists are often based on the principles from the ILO-convention.

Overall, each country’s list defines the rights of the unemployed with respect to health, moral and labour legislation to refuse a job. But the list of valid reasons can also be perceived as defining the demands on the unemployed in order to be eligible for unemployment benefits.

In relation to the indicator of availability at the labour market, a large list of valid reasons do help to secure the rights of the unemployed but will in this respect be regarded as an obstacle to the flexibility at the labour market. Hence countries with a list of only a few valid reasons for refusals will be regarded as having relatively strict demands on the availability of the unemployed.

As mentioned above, all countries in the survey have lists of valid reasons, but the principles and the extent of reasons vary. Furthermore, the restrictions on occupational and geographical mobility are closely related to the criterion on availability, since wages and transportation time often are included on the lists. In addition, each country’s model for settlement and agreements at the labour market could be reflected in the valid reasons for refusing a job offer, for example if the labour market is mainly regulated by central authorities.

Since the answers to the questionnaire might not give an extensive list of the valid reasons, this part of the indicator does not carry much weight in the final calculations of the indicator.

#### **Cf. 6-8. Benefit sanctions applied in cases of self-induced resignation from jobs or refusal of participation in active labour market programmes or refusal of job offers without valid reasons**

People resigning from jobs without a valid reason or unemployed refusing to accept job offers or participate in ALMPs are most frequently subject to sanctions in the form of temporary or complete withdrawal of benefit payments.

However, in Australia, the benefit sanctions start as a reduction of the benefit by a specific percentage in case of refusal of job offers and resignation.

In Denmark, the sanctions normally include temporary withdrawal of benefits for 3 weeks if the unemployed refuses a job offer. However, if the unemployed has had more than 2 years of unemployment, and refuses to participate in activation, or is under the age of 25 and has inadequate qualifications, and he/she refuses to participate in activation, the consequence is loss of entitlement to unemployment benefits.

In some cases, the length of the disqualification period will be subject to the discretion of the authorities. Accordingly, people quitting a job without valid reason in England can lose benefits for between 1 and 26 weeks, but the final decision is left to the adjudication officer to decide.

Overall, the strictness of the criterion has been determined by the duration of the sanctions. In case the sanctions are given as benefit reductions, the reductions have been tentatively calculated into weeks of full withdrawal.

The 26 weeks reduction of 18 percent in Australia equals around 5 weeks of temporary withdrawal. Suspension of benefits is regarded as very strict compared to temporary withholds from payments.

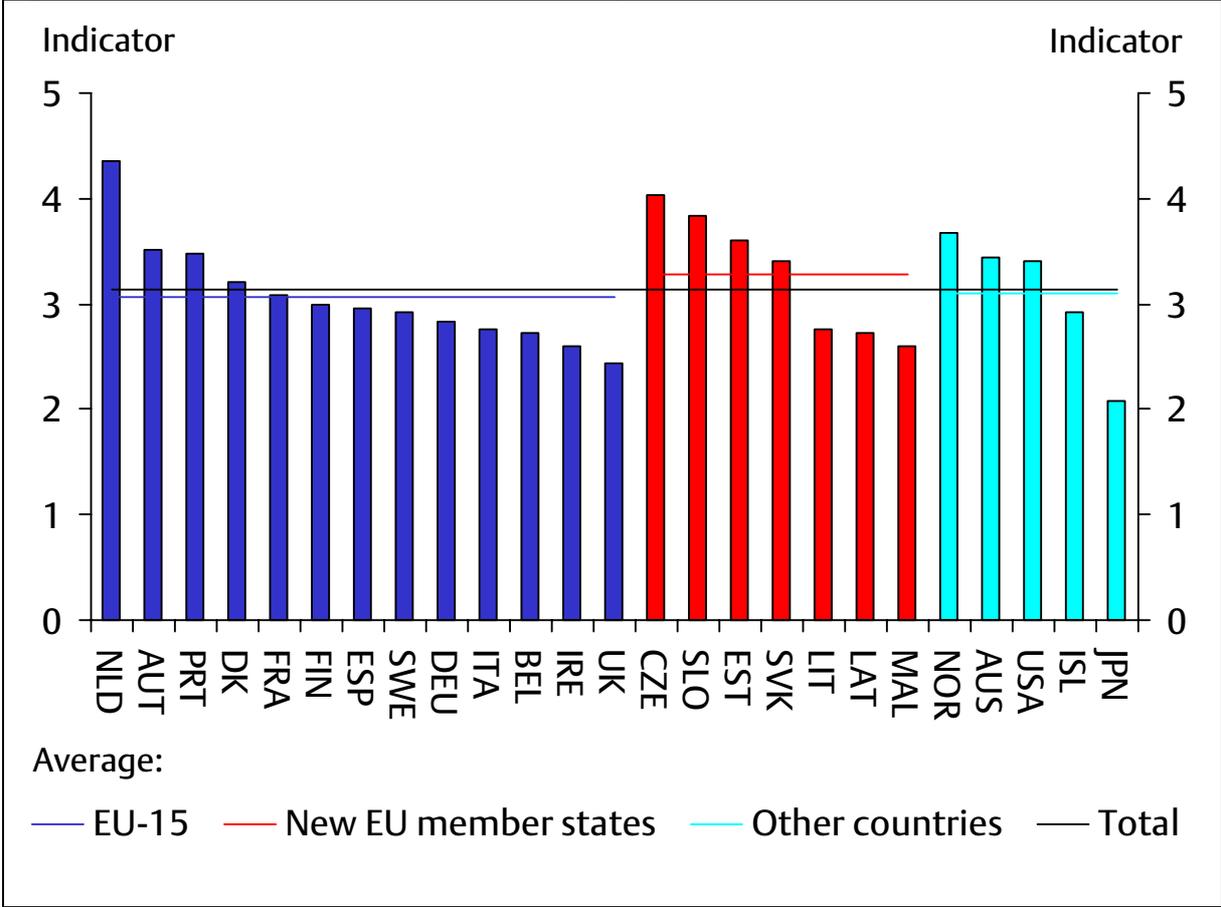
**Table 1. Calculation of the degree of strictness in availability rules, 2004**

Criteria	Weight	NLD	CZE	SLO	NOR	EST	AUT	PRT	USA	SVK	AUS	DK	FRA	FIN	ESP	ISL	SWE	DEU	ITA	LIT	LAT	BEL	IRE	MAL	UK	JPN
1. Demands on jobsearch.....	0.75	5	5	3	2	3	5	3	5	5	5	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	3	1	2	3	1	5	4
2. Demands on job availability when the unemployed participates in active labour market policy programmes. ....	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	n.a.	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	1	1	3	1	5	5	1	1
3. Demands on occupational mobility.....	1	3	3	3	5	3	4	3	3	2	5	5	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	4
4. Demands on geographical mobility.....	1	3	2	3	5	1	4	1	2	5	2	4	1	3	2	3	5	3	2	3	2	4	2	2	2	1
5. The extend of valid reasons for refusal.....	0.25	5	3	5	5	3	5	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	3	5	3	3	3
6. Sanctions applied in case of self-induced resignation from jobs. Number of weeks with suspension of unemployment benefits.....	0.5	5	4	n.a.	2	5	1	5	4	1	3	1	4	3	5	2	2	3	5	3	2	3	2	4	3	3
7. Sanctions applied when activation or job offers are refused by the unemployed ...	1	5	5	n.a.	2	5	2	5	5	4	2	1	5	2	3	4	2	1	5	4	5	3	2	4	2	1
8. Sanctions applied when the unemployed repeatedly rejects activation or job offers. ....	0.75	5	5	5	3	4	2	5	5	1	2	4	5	4	3	5	3	3	5	3	4	3	1	1	3	1
Weighted sum .....	6.25	27.3	25.3	18.3	23	22.5	22	18.3	21.3	21.3	21.5	20	19.3	18.8	18.5	18.3	18.3	17.8	17.3	17.3	17	17	16.3	16.3	15.3	13
Indicator .....		4.4	4	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.1	3	3	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.1

#### 4. Presentation of the summary indicator

The summary indicator varies a lot between countries. For some countries the indicator shows very strict availability rules - eg. Austria and Netherlands from the present EU-members, the Czech Republic and Slovenia from the new EU-countries and Australia and Norway as non-EU-members, cf. figure 1.

Figure 1. Indicator of strictness in the availability rules in selected countries 2004



In the other end Ireland, United Kingdom, Malta and Japan have relative lax rules in comparison to the other countries. There are not systematic differences in the sense that present EU members, new EU-members or non-EU-members have strict or lax rules.

#### 5. Policy changes over time

Compared to the 1997-questionnaire, several countries have tightened the availability rules, eg. Austria, Ireland and Iceland. On the other hand countries like Sweden and Belgium have loosened the availability rules over the period, cf. figure 2. In Sweden the 1997-level were high and the laxity of this were decided in connection with the 2000/2001 reform of the unemployment benefit system.

Figure 2a. Indicator of strictness in the availability rules in selected countries in 1997 and 2004

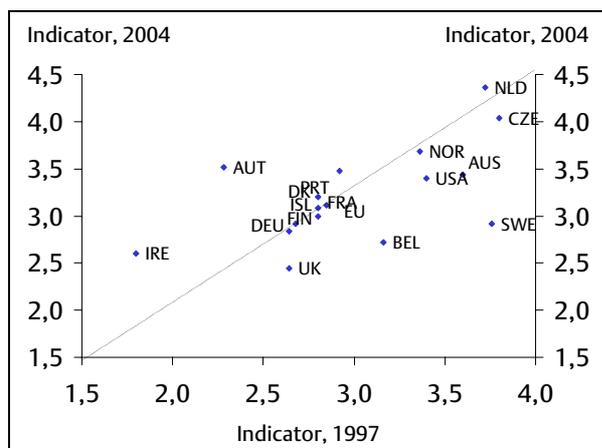
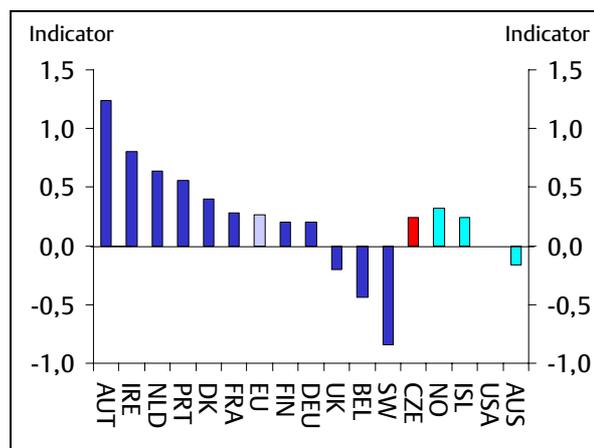


Figure 2b. Change in indicator 1997-2004



Note: On request by Department of Employment and Workplace Relations the ratings given to Australia in 1997 for question 6,7 and 8 are changed retrospectively.

In the beginning of the 1990'ies, Denmark were among the countries with the weakest availability requirements, *cf. Danish Ministry of Finance, Availability Criteria in selected OECD countries, Working Paper no. 6 (1998)*, but by now it has reached the average level. Thus the counterpart of maintaining the high level of unemployment benefit replacement rate during the 1990'ies have been a considerable higher focus on availability criteria both in the unemployment benefit scheme and in the social assistance scheme.

## 6. The composition of the indicator

The countries weight different aspects of the availability rules. Thus the indicator can be divided into questions regarding availability requirements respectively benefit sanctions in case of lacking compliance with the rules.

Availability requirements deal with for example the degree of job seeking, availability during activation and occupational and geographical mobility, that is required to currently be entitled to unemployment benefits. Sanctions deal with consequences of turning down eg. a job offer or an activation offer.

There is a tendency that within the EU Southern-European countries (and France, Iceland and Netherlands) together with the new EU-countries - eg. the Czech Republic and Estonia - put relative more weight on benefit sanctions than on direct availability requirements, *cf. figure 4.a and 4.b*, while countries like Austria, Denmark, Australia and Norway weight the availability requirements more.

Figure 4a. Availability requirements, 2004

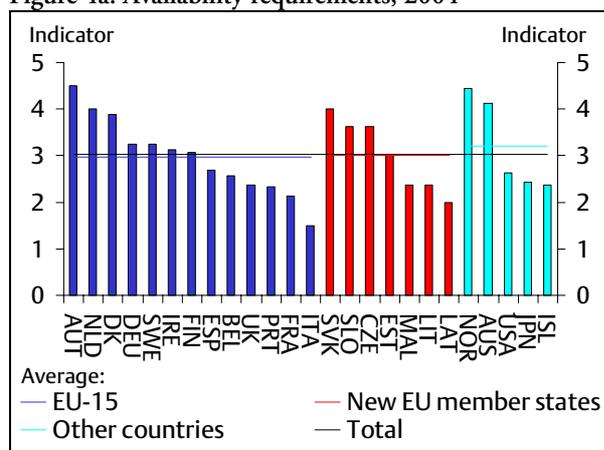
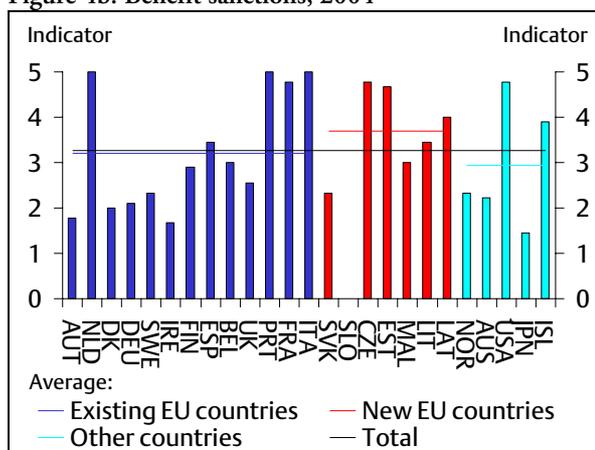


Figure 4b. Benefit sanctions, 2004



Note: The indicator of availability requirements is a weighted average of criteria 1-5 and the indicator of benefit sanctions is a weighted average of criteria 6-8.

For example unemployed in Austria are supposed to show a job application per week, while the sanctions for self-inflicted unemployment are relative mild, as those, who have quit their job themselves, can receive unemployment benefits after only 4 weeks of unemployment. Italy on the contrary has no requirement of job search activities. But those, who experience self-inflicted unemployment has in general no possibilities of receiving unemployment benefits. Other countries put more equal weight on the two aspects of availability.

It should be noted that, the relative mild sanctions in Denmark are a result of the fact that it is possible to receive unemployment benefits already after 3 weeks when self-inflicted unemployment or after turning down a job offer from the job centre.

## 7. Availability criteria and structural unemployment

An empirical analysis of the relation between on one hand the differences in level of unemployment in 19 OECD-countries and the unemployment development in the respective countries during the period of 1983 to 1999 and on the other hand the employment policy and different institutional conditions in the labour markets in the respective countries has been carried out by the Ministry of Finance in Denmark<sup>2</sup>.

The setup is using information both cross country and over time for several of the indicators. A country specific constant has been added to explain differences between the countries that could not be explained by the used indicators.

The measures used in the empirical analysis are measures of gross replacement rate, duration of unemployment benefit, strictness of availability rules, employment criteria for receiving benefit, active labour market policy, job protection, product market regulation, tax on labour, union members and cyclical economic movements.

<sup>2</sup> The results of this analysis are reported in the Danish Medium Term Survey 2004, which will be published later this year.

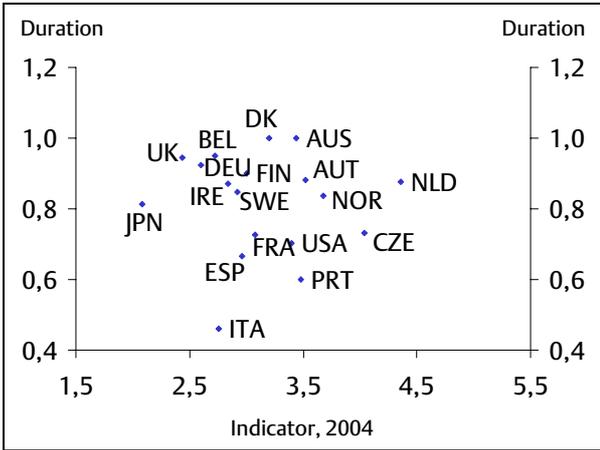
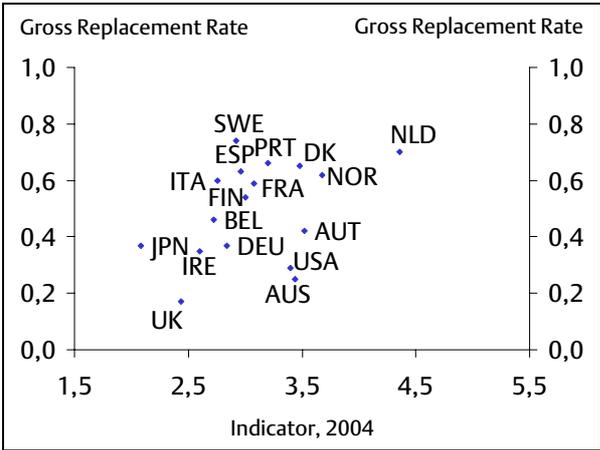
The analysis indicates that more strict availability criteria lead to a lower structural level of unemployment. The coefficient to the availability criteria represented by the indicator is significant at a 10 per cent level.

The analysis also shows that a higher level of replacement rate or longer duration of unemployment benefit in it self induce a higher actual and structural unemployment. On the other hand more strict employment criteria and a more active labour market policy tends to lead to a lower structural level of unemployment.

It is also possible to identify different employment system patterns within selected EU-countries. Some of the EU-countries that have relative high unemployment benefit replacement rates combines with relative strict rules of availability according to the indicator. For example Denmark and Netherlands, which are countries that have relative strict availability rules, cf. figure 6a and 6b. On the other hand UK and Ireland, which are countries with relative small replacement rates, also have relative lax rules.

Figure 6a. Indicator of strictness in the availability rules and gross replacement rates<sup>1)</sup> in selected countries

Figure 6b. Indicator of strictness in the availability rules and index for duration of unemployment<sup>2)</sup> in selected countries



Note:

- 1) The Gross replacement rate is calculated as the replacement rate during the first year of unemployment measures as an average over three family types and for two different levels of income (before tax). For Italy the replacement rate for 1999 is a special mobility-benefit, which is only paid to unemployed that are laid off in connection to a collective firing round.
- 2) The index for duration of unemployment benefits are based on the net replacement rates over the first five years of unemployment. The net replacement rate is used as a measure for duration. OECD uses gross replacement rates, but this measure does no take in to account, that some unemployed after a short period of time are transferred to other types of income transfers. For example in Sweden, where unemployed in 1999 were activated after only 1 year of unemployment and therefore no longer were entitled to unemployment benefits.

Source: OECD, *Benefits and Wages* 1999, Questionnaire from 1997 and 2004 and own calculations.

This contributes to illustrate the necessity of strict availability rules, when a country chooses to have relative high replacement rates, so that people active in the labour market can be identified from housewives and/or balance between distributional and employment policies considerations can be preserved.

## 8. Appendix

### Underlying information about availability criteria in selected countries

The tables below illustrate the answers to the questionnaire on job availability criteria and the resulting point given in connection to the indicator of the strictness of the rules.

#### 1. Demands on job search activity

##### Question: Are the unemployed required to report or to provide evidence of job search during the spell of unemployment?

Australia	To receive payment, unemployed people must demonstrate that they are actively seeking work or engaged in an activity designed to improve their employment prospects. Generally, unemployed people must advise of their efforts to find employment each fortnight. Unemployed people are generally required to apply for at least four jobs per fortnight. In the early stages of unemployment this number is usually increased to up to 10 jobs per fortnight, depending on conditions in their local labour market and the person's individual circumstances.
Austria	The unemployed must show applications for at least one job per week.
Belgium	The entitlement to unemployment benefit is counterbalanced by the obligation to be available for work and by the exposure to possible controls.
Czech Republic	The unemployed must often (usually every second week) prove job search activity.
Denmark	The unemployed should be available for work, but there exist no formal demands on job search activity, e.g. in terms of number of job applicants etc. However, in connection with the unemployment service, the unemployed could be asked to provide evidence on job search activity.
Estonia	The unemployed must visit the employment office at least once within thirty days.
Finland	The unemployed is obliged to enter into a contract (job-seeking plan) on how to seek job after being unemployed for 5 months. Failure to do so and to fail to follow the contract may lead to sanctions.
France	The unemployed are examined every four months.
Germany	An integration agreement concluded by the employment agency and the unemployed must specify, for a period to be decided on, the placement efforts of the employment agency, the unemployed person's own efforts and, to the extent that the relevant requirements are met, future benefits under active employment promotion. The integration agreement is binding for both sides, it underpins the responsibility of the employment agency vis-à-vis the unemployed, and it makes the unemployed realise which efforts he himself is expected to make. The agreement contains the intended individual placement strategy which must be updated regularly or adapted to changes that occur; the strategy not only calls for the employment agency to undertake job placement efforts, but also requires the person out of work to intensively look for a new job. There is no binding requirement to furnish evidence of the person's own efforts, e.g. two applications per month.
Ireland	The unemployed must show applications on an ongoing basis.
Island	Yes, by delivering a memo to the PES.
Italy	No.
Japan	The unemployed must show that they have actually done job-seeking activities more than twice per 28 days in order to obtain benefits.
Latvia	In compliance with legislation, reports are not.
Lithuania	The unemployed must inform the Labour exchange about active job seeking and he/she must within three days of finding a job report to the Labour exchange.
Malta	Unemployed are not required to report or provide evidence of job search unless they have been put on a Personal Action Plan. In this case they have to report on any job searches between one appointment and another. Between appointments they are also required to visit the job centers at least once a week where they can check for

	appropriate vacancies.
Netherlands	The unemployed has an obligation to search for work and prove that he looks for work to the authorities (as a general norm at least one solicitation letter per week).
Norway	The Public Employment Service and the recipient of unemployment benefit should agree which activities the recipient should carry out while he/her receive unemployment benefits, for instance seeking jobs or participation in ALMP. If agreement of activities is not received, the Public Employment Service can instruct the recipient to carry out an activity. The Public Employment Service can demand that the recipient proves which activities he/her has carried out.
Portugal	Yes, it is one of the obligations of a jobseeker, as a pre-requisite for considering the unemployed jobseeker as available for work (one of the general requirements for being entitled to unemployment benefits), to perform an active job search. The proof of 'active job search' efforts, which is collected by the Job Centre's staff (as one of their attributions), is given by any evidence presented to the PES by jobseekers of: Reply to job vacancy advertisements; Job search by direct contact to potential employers; Addressing spontaneous job / CV applications; Actively looking for job opportunities, by his/her own initiative, in Employment Offices and/or other partner organisations, namely UNIVA's (Units of Integration into Working Life) and Job Clubs.
Slovakia	The unemployed shall actively seek job in a provable way during the spell of unemployment. The Labor Office imposes duty on the unemployed to personally appear at the office, so called "periodicity of calls". The Labor Office applies following periodicity of calls: once in seven calendar days for long term unemployed, once a month for unemployed taking part in any type of ALMP's programs, once for fortnight for remained unemployed.
Slovenia	Every unemployed person is obliged to provide evidence of active job search during the spell of unemployment regardless of the fact whether or not this person was referred to employer by employment service.
Spain	The unemployed must sign the official document of "activity commitment". Moreover, regarding jobs offers for which he/she has been selected by the Public Employment Service, the unemployed must submit a document that certifies that he has attended the interview in the location and date indicated. However, not evidence of independent job search activity is required.
Sweden	Searching for work is supposed to be a full-time occupation. A person is required to seek work actively in order to be entitled to unemployment benefits. Jobseekers who refuse an offer of suitable work or a labour marked measure risk a reduction of unemployment benefit.
United Kingdom	When a jobseeker first makes a claim for JSA they enter into a Jobseeker's Agreement. This lays out the steps they must take to find employment. The jobseeker is obliged to show they have taken the agreed steps each week and will be questioned regarding their jobseeking activities when they attend the Jobcentre Plus office each fortnight.
USA	In general, unless individuals have a definite recall date, are members of a union hiring hall, or are participating in approved training, they must search for work. Many states require individuals to provide information on their job search efforts every week/two weeks to demonstrate their continued eligibility to receive benefits. Other states require individuals to maintain records of their job search activities should they be asked to provide them to the state agency.

### Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding demands on job search activity

No systematic check of job search activity		The unemployed must regularly prove job search activity		The unemployed must often i.e. every week prove job search activity
1	2	3	4	5
DK, FRA, DEU, ITA, LAT, MAL, SWE	BEL,FIN,NOR, ESP	EST,IRE,ISL, LIT,PRT,SLO	JPN	AUS,AUT,CZE, UK,NLD,SVK,USA

## 2. Demands on job availability when the unemployed participates in active labour market policy programmes

**Question: Is the unemployed available for work during participation in active labour market programmes (ALMP's)?**

Australia	Job seekers are required under the Social Security Act to maintain active job search while participating in Job Network services and other labour market programmes. All job seekers with Activity Test requirements must be available for work and must accept offers of suitable employment. However, when unemployed people are engaged in activities which are designed to help address their non-vocational barriers to employment (for example, the Personal Support Programme), they are not obliged to look for work as participation in the programme meets the job seekers obligations under the Activity Test.
Austria	The unemployed must accept job offers during participation in ALMP's, but is not obliged to apply for jobs
Belgium	The unemployed is released from the obligation to be available for the labour market if he is undergoing a specific training or taking up studies. As regards short-term or part-time trainings, the dispensation from the availability obligation will only be granted where the training is part of an (official) integration scheme and/or the placement service describes the training as being a direct help to vocational integration.
Czech Republic	The labour office does not mediate new jobs during participation in ALMP's. However, the unemployed should always be available for work under activation.
Denmark	During participation in ALMP's unemployed are available for work and have to apply for jobs and must be able to start in a new job with one day notice.
Estonia	The unemployed must accept suitable job offers during participation in ALMP's, but is not obliged to apply for jobs.
Finland	The unemployed must accept job offers during participation in ALMP's, but is not obliged to apply for jobs.
France	The unemployed must accept job offers during participation in ALMP's, but is not obliged to provide evidence of job search.
Germany	The employment agency may place a jobless person in an acceptable training measure or job while this person participates in an integration programme. Unemployed persons are required to continue making their own efforts when participating in ALMPs.
Hungary	
Ireland	Those participating in EAP are considered to be available for work.
Island	The unemployed in ALMP's is not obliged to apply for jobs.
Italy	The participation in ALMP's does not prevent workers from accepting job offers or from applying for jobs, but currently there is no obligation for the unemployed.
Japan	Under the employment insurance system, the unemployed cannot work during the program when they take a public training program following instruction of chief of Public Employment Security Offices. But it is possible for them to carry out job-seeking activities.
Latvia	In compliance with legislation, the unemployed can sign labour contract up to 2 months also during the time of involvement in the active employment activities.
Lithuania	Unemployed who are not prepared for participation in the labour market (without qualifications, or their profession or activity is not popular or unsaleable in the labour market, who lost their professional qualifications because did not work longer as one year, are offered public work (the labour contract for such kind of work is needed) and this offer is equal to the work under labour contract. When unemployed, participating in vocational training programme, finds a job by himself, he is allowed to employ and upon the agreement of his employer to continue his training.
Malta	Yes, according to the Employment and Training Service Act, anyone registering as

	unemployed should be available for work at all times.
Netherlands	During participation in ALMP's the unemployed has to except a job offer and is obliged to search for work. Unemployed enjoying their holidays or being older than 64 years are exempted from these obligations. Also exempted are unemployed, that follow a 'necessary' education and who will finish this education within 2 month.
Norway	The unemployed is supposed to be an active job searcher and must accept job offers during participation in ALMP's.
Portugal	It depends on the programme. In principle, when participating in ALMP's related to vocational training and/or to business start-ups, and/or hiring incentives, the unemployed are not available for a new job opportunity. Only in case of occupational activities are they available for work. In this case, namely in Occupational Programmes, it is foreseen that the jobseeker will have a day per week aimed at active job search initiatives.
Slovakia	The unemployed shall be available within tree days from delivery of a written invitation, or of a verbal invitation of the Labor Office for purposes of job mediation, participation in the active labor market programs and activation programs. The unemployed person is available for work during participation in the ALMP's programs.
Slovenia	Yes.
Spain	Yes, the unemployed must accept job offers during participation in ALMPs.
Sweden	The work and competence approach is the corner stone of the Swedish labour market policy and guidance within the unemployment insurance. If there is no available work, the unemployed shall be offered a suitable education or other measure that might lead to a job. The main goal is therefore for the unemployed to seek work even during participation in ALMP's. However, the unemployed and the employment officer may have decided something else in the individual action plan. The action plan is important to shorten the unemployment periods by an early establishing of the qualifications of the unemployed and by upholding the job seeking intensity, and the will/possibility to widen the professional and geographical search. The action plan is also an instrument to identify suitable labour market policy programs.
United Kingdom	It is not mandatory for a jobseeker to apply for work whilst participating in a training option. However, they can take up a job opportunity if it is offered to them.
USA	If individuals are participating in approved training programs, states may not hold them ineligible or disqualified for being unavailable for work, failing to search for work, or refusing suitable work. If they are participating in other educational or training programs, they would be ineligible to receive UI benefits if they are unavailable for work.

**Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding demands on job availability when the unemployed participates in active labour market policy programmes**

No demands on job availability during activation i.e. because the main part of activation benefits is separated from the unemployment system		Generally, the unemployed must be available for work during activation, except from the active labour market programmes, where the received benefit is separated from the unemployment benefit system		The unemployed should always be available for work under activation, however, in some instances the unemployed is not obligated to search actively for jobs him/her self
1	2	3	4	5
ITA, BEL, LIT, JPN, UK, USA		LAT	ISL	DK, FRA, DEU, MAL, SWE, FIN, NOR, ESP, EST, IRE, SLO, AUS, AUT, CZE, NLD, SVK

### 3. Demands on occupational mobility

**Question: What requirements must the unemployed fulfil with respect to occupational mobility?**

Australia	People on unemployment payments must accept any offer of suitable work. Suitable work is all work that a person is capable of doing, not just a person's traditional occupations or work that they would prefer to do. Unemployed people are encouraged to look for all types of suitable work and unemployed people who fail to search for work in a wide range of suitable areas, without a reasonable excuse, may be subject to a financial penalty.
Austria	The unemployed must accept job offers out of his domicile, if the providing of his family is not endangered.
Belgium	As a rule, the unemployed must accept any 'suitable job'. The notion of 'suitable job' changes, depending on the duration of the unemployment.
Czech Republic	The unemployed must accept job offers in the field of his/her profession, even at a lower qualification level. A person is asked to look for work in another field if he/she cannot find work in his/her normal one. Special attention is paid to the age, level of education, length of previous employment etc.
Denmark	Unemployed must accept all suitable jobs. Suitable jobs include all job offers, which the unemployed is capable of doing or can easily be trained to do.
Estonia	Registration as unemployed will be terminated in case the unemployed refuses offered suitable work or employment training for the second time. Suitable work means employment which an employment office deems suitable for a person considering his or her education, occupational qualifications, work experience, state of health, sex and the distance of the place of residence from the place of work.
Finland	During the first 3 months of the unemployment spell, the unemployed must accept job offers only if they're part of his/her occupational area.
France	The unemployed must accept job offers if they're part of his occupational area.
Germany	In principle unemployed beneficiary may be expected to accept any job corresponding to his working capacities to the extent that general or personal reasons are not incompatible with the reasonableness of a job. The unemployed beneficiary may not rely on the employment agency offering him jobs for which he has been trained. Nonetheless, in its placement efforts the employment agency seeks to match the "right employee" and "the suitable job". If this is not possible, and the unemployed's own efforts are without success, too, the community of insureds may expect that the unemployed beneficiary adjusts his personal interests and wishes, which obviously are not realisable, to the needs of the labour market. In specifying the reasonableness of a job, however, account must be taken of the income to be obtained. Consequently, from the point of view of remuneration, jobs are considered to be reasonable for the unemployed where earnings in the first three months of unemployment are not lower by more than 20 % of the wages from work on the basis of which unemployment benefit is determined; in the following three months are not lower by more than 30 % of the wages from work which serve as a basis of unemployment benefit; after the first six months of unemployment reach the level of the unemployment benefit.
Ireland	Unemployed persons are entitled to three months to seek work in their own chosen area.
Island	During the first 4 weeks of unemployment the unemployed can reject job offers within his occupational area.
Italy	The unemployed must accept job offers fitting his professional skills, otherwise she/he loses her/his unemployment seniority (this does not mean, currently (see 2a), that she/he loses also the benefit).
Japan	We don't have such requirements in the Employment Insurance System. (If the unemployed refuse getting a job, which is introduced by PESO, benefits are stopped providing for a month.)
Latvia	If unemployed refuses the appropriate (it is stipulated by the legislation) job two times, the unemployed person loses the unemployed status.
Lithuania	For unemployed ready for the labour market, the labour exchange will, within one

	<p>month since registration, prepare an individual plan of placement, which includes measures of activities of the unemployed and labour exchange. The unemployed is offered a job according to his/her profession and qualifications or experiences. The job-seeking period is estimated individually, in accordance with the demand of his/her profession.</p> <p>Unemployed, registered in the Labour exchange and having right to additional employment guaranties (being socially vulnerable, according to the Law on the Support to Unemployed), are provided with individual employment plans, in which are foreseen active labour market policy measures most acceptable in their situation for reintegration to the Labour market. In this case, if within three months since registering in the Labour exchange the unemployed does not find a job and his/her participation in other active labour market policy measures is not foreseen, subsidised work places are to be established to employ them.</p>
Malta	When a person registers with the Corporation, they are requested to give their own occupational preferences. These should be a minimum of three preferences and a maximum of five. The Corporation then submits relevant job opportunities to the registrants in accordance to their preferences. This means that the unemployed are only obliged to accept job offers in their preferred occupational area.
Netherlands	In principle, an unemployed does not need to accept a job outside his or her living and working community. However, an obligation to move might be imposed on a person that has no direct social responsibilities in the region. The obligation will be considered in individual cases. For example a single young person might be asked to move, parents with children are usually not asked to move.
Norway	The recipient must at short notice and in any part of Norway, be available for any type of part- or full-time work he/she is physically and mentally capable of doing. Occupational mobility is a basic condition for being entitled to benefits.
Portugal	With respect to occupational mobility, the unemployed jobseeker should accept any job offer whose functional contents and tasks are considered adequate to his/her profile, having into account his/her physical abilities, education level, vocational training and previous professional experience, as well as the respect for the minimum wage and other requirements established in common law and in collective bargaining agreements.
Slovakia	The unemployed person has to accept suitable employment, which is defined as employment that takes in account the state of health, qualification and occupational skills of unemployed person, and considers the nature of recently performed work.
Spain	In the first year the unemployed must accept job offers only if they are in line with their stated preferences, their aptitudes and skills or their previous occupation.
Sweden	During the first 100 days, the jobseeker can limit the search area both occupationally and geographically but thereafter the jobseeker must be prepared to expand the search areas.
United Kingdom	In certain circumstances a jobseeker is allowed to restrict their jobsearch. This means that for a period of up to 13 weeks they can look for work within their usual occupation, or work that pays the rate of pay they normally receive and can restrict the area in which they are prepared to travel to find work. However, they must show they still have reasonable chance of finding work despite these restrictions. It is expected after this period that the jobseeker would accept any work they can do.
USA	Federal law requires that benefits not be denied to individuals if they refuse offers of employment in which the wages, hours, or other conditions of work offered are substantially less favourable than those prevailing for similar work in the area; if the position is vacant due to a labour dispute; or the individual would be required to join a union or resign from/refrain from joining a labour organization. Most states have additional requirements with respect to suitability of work by establishing criteria by which the suitability of a work offer shall be determined. The criteria include degree of risk to a worker's health, safety, and morals; the physical fitness, prior training, experience, and earnings of the individual; the prospects for work in a customary occupation; and the time of day/shift an individual can work.

**Question: Do the requirements of occupational mobility change over the unemployment spell?**

Australia	No, the requirements of occupational mobility do not change over the unemployment spell.
Austria	After exhaustion of UI benefits and during income of unemployment assistance the unemployment must accept all kinds of job
Belgium	Yes
Czech Republic	The requirements are not changed over the unemployment spell.
Denmark	No.
Estonia	No.
Finland	After the first 3 months of the unemployment spell, the unemployed must accept all kinds of job he/she is capable of doing.
France	No.
Germany	Yes, see above
Ireland	Unemployed persons must accept any kind of suitable employment after 3 months of unemployment.
Island	The unemployed must accept all kinds of job he/she is qualified to after one month of unemployment.
Italy	No.
Japan	No.
Latvia	No.
Lithuania	If the unemployed has not been employed during the period, foreseen in the individual employment plan he is offered to change profession or to raise qualifications.
Malta	Generally the requirements do not change over the unemployment spell. Registering persons can choose to change their occupational area as they wish, as long as they possess the appropriate qualifications. At times the Employment Advisers may suggest occupational areas where a shortage of skilled workers has been noted, however occupational mobility change is not enforced on the registrants.
Netherlands	No.
Norway	There are no changes in the mobility requirements over the unemployment spell.
Portugal	No, although the unemployed jobseeker is supposed to increase his/her functional polyvalence during the implementation of his/her integration pathway, namely when it includes training interventions.
Slovakia	No.
Slovenia	There is no special requirements to be fulfilled regarding occupational mobility during unemployment in Slovenia. Possibilities for occupational mobility are ascertained and determined in the process of vocational guidance and stipulated in employment plan between unemployed person and employment service on individual basis.
Spain	The unemployed must accept any job that the Employment Service considers appropriated for them after one year of unemployment.
Sweden	Yes, see above
United Kingdom	Yes, see above
USA	A few states change the definition of suitable work as the duration of unemployment increases. For example, the wages the individual must be willing to accept may decrease as the length of the spell of unemployment increases. In addition, some states expand the scope of types of work the individual must be willing to accept beyond their normal trade or occupation as duration of unemployment increases.

## Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding demands on occupational mobility

The unemployed can refuse job offers in other occupational areas for a limited time period		No explicit reservations, but the unemployed's qualifications and the length of the unemployment spell are taken into account		No reservation, meaning that the unemployed must accept all job offers the he or she is capable of doing
1 (6 months or more)	2 (less than 6 months)	3	4	5
ITA, LAT, FRA, MAL, ESP	LIT,UK,SWE, FIN,IRE,SVK,ISL	PRT,BEL,USA,DE U,EST,SLO,CZE, NLD	JPN,AUT	DK,NOR, AUS

#### 4. Demands on geographical mobility

**Question: What requirements must the unemployed fulfil with respect to geographical mobility?**

Australia	Unemployed people must accept job offers unless the work would involve commuting that is considered unreasonably difficult. A job would be regarded as within reasonable commuting distance if the journey between the place of work and the unemployed person's home does not normally exceed 90 minutes and the cost of travel does not exceed 10% of the gross wage offered. The commuting would also be considered reasonable if a substantial number of people living in the same area as the customer regularly commute to their places of work.
Austria	See Q3 above.
Belgium	After six months, the notion of 'suitable job' is more easily defined by its opposite: a job is 'not suitable' if it regularly necessitates daily commuting of more than four hours or absence from home of more than twelve hours. This cause cannot be put forward if the distance between home and the place of employment is less than 25 kilometres.
Czech Republic	There is no defined value of the acceptable geographical mobility. However, in case the applicant does not prove serious personal or family reasons, he/she must accept a job search even outside the place of residency.
Denmark	During the first 3 months of unemployment the unemployed must accept up to 3 hours of daily transportation. After 3 months of unemployment must the unemployed accept more than 3 hours of daily transportation. Workers with an education level corresponding to at least a bachelors degree must accept any transportation time if particular job vacancies cannot be filled otherwise.
Estonia	No special requirements.
Finland	The unemployed must accept job offers, which situate in his/her working area. Singles without children must accept a permanent full-time job outside his/her working area. The working area is normally defined as his/her home region and neighbouring regions.
France	No requirements.
Germany	In terms of regional mobility jobs are considered reasonable only if the commuting time does not exceed a total of 2 ½ hours relative to daily working hours of more than six hours and 2 hours in the case of daily working hours of up to six. If in a region distances are generally longer, the unemployed beneficiary must be prepared to accept travelling such distances. Also, the employment agency can insist on the unemployed beneficiary accepting employment if this involves his moving if it cannot reasonably be expected that he takes up employment within the above-mentioned commuting distance in the first three months of unemployment. But the employment agency must take account of important reasons given by the unemployed beneficiary (e.g. family ties) that rule out moving. Financial consequences of a move must also be considered. In assessing the costs of removal it should be kept in mind that the employment agency may encourage taking up employment in a place other than the place of residence by paying the costs of separate housekeeping and removal.
Ireland	Unemployed persons must accept all suitable job offers, within a reasonable/acceptable distance.
Island	The requirements are evaluated in each case.
Italy	The unemployed must accept job offers placed within a radius of 50 kms, otherwise she/he loses her/his unemployment seniority.
Japan	No such requirements in the Employment Insurance System.
Latvia	The unemployed must reach the workplace by the public transport (in one direction) within the one hour.
Lithuania	The unemployed is offered a job if the distance to the work place is no longer as 3 hours, using public transport or if he or she have child under 8 years – 2 hours
Malta	Malta is a small island that at maximum entails 1-hour travel from one side to the other. This is why the Unemployed registering with the Corporation must accept all

	jobs falling under their occupational areas. Exceptions to this rule, however, exist. Since the Maltese islands consist of three sister islands; Malta, Gozo and Comino, registrants are given the choice to refuse job offers available on the islands which are not their resident island.
Netherlands	The living/ working region is limited by a maximum travel time of 3 hours a day with public transport. Regarding the size of the Netherlands, this comprises a large part of the country.
Norway	The unemployed must in general accept job offers anywhere in Norway. Geographical mobility is a basic condition for being entitled to benefits. Exceptions to this rule may be granted for older workers (above 60 years) or for important social reasons (e.g. health or responsibility for children).
Portugal	With respect to geographical mobility, the unemployed jobseeker should accept any job offer which does not cause any serious prejudice to the person in question and/or to his/her family. Geographical mobility is not compulsory (not a requirement), but stimulated by means of financial incentives.
Slovakia	The unemployed person has to accept all jobs offers without taking account the travel to work time.
Slovenia	The unemployed must accept all job offers, which entail at most 11 hours of stay from home daily.
Spain	The unemployed must accept job offers: - located in the unemployed 's residence municipality - located in another municipality placed in a radio of less than 30 km, except when the minimum commuting time exceeds 25 per cent of the daily working time or trip costs are higher than 20 per cent of the monthly wage. - or when it is possible to find an adequate lodging in the new job 's location. However, the Public Employment Service will take into account the unemployed 's personal circumstances, the kind of job, what transports are available and suchlike. Moreover, the contractual wage minus trip costs cannot be lower than the minimum wage.
Sweden	During the first 100 days, the jobseeker can limit the search area both occupationally and geographically but thereafter the jobseeker must be prepared to expand the search areas.
United Kingdom	Currently it is expected that a jobseeker will look for work in an area within 1 hours travelling distance each way.
USA	In general, states consider work suitable if the job is located within the established commuting distance for that area or if the job is in the same locality as the last job an individual held. However, changes in residence and expense of travel are taken into account by some states.

**Question: Do the requirements of geographical mobility change over the unemployment spell?**

Australia	No, the requirements of geographical mobility do not change over the unemployment spell.
Austria	See Q3 above.
Belgium	Yes, see above.
Czech Republic	The requirements are not changed over the unemployment spell.
Denmark	Yes, see Q3 above.
Estonia	No.
Finland	No.
France	No.
Germany	There is no change of the requirements of regional mobility during unemployment.
Ireland	No.
Island	No.
Italy	No.
Japan	No.
Latvia	No.
Lithuania	Requirement of geographical mobility during the unemployment period might be changed upon agreement with the unemployed.
Malta	No.
Netherlands	No.
Norway	No.
Portugal	No.
Slovakia	No.
Slovenia	No.
Spain	No.
Sweden	Yes, se above.
United Kingdom	No.
USA	No.

**Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding demands on geographical mobility**

No demands on geographical mobility	The unemployed must accept a daily transportation time of 1 to 2 hours a day	The unemployed must accept a daily transportation time of 2 to 3 hours a day	The unemployed must accept a daily transportation time of 3 to 4 hours a day	The unemployed must be willing to move
1	2	3	4	5
FRA,PRT,EST, JPN	ITA,LAT,MAL, ESP,UK,IRE, USA,AUS,CZE	NLD,LIT,FIN, ISL,DEU,SLO	BEL,AUT,DK	SWE,SVK,NOR

## 5. The extent of valid reasons for refusal

**Question: Can the unemployed refuse to accept a job offer or to participate in ALMP's without losing the right to unemployment benefit (if yes please state the valid reasons for refusal)?**

Australia	Unemployed people are able to refuse a job offer that is for unsuitable work. Examples where work may be considered unsuitable for a person include: requires particular skills, experience or qualifications that the unemployed person does not have. The employer also will not provide training; may aggravate a pre-existing illness, disability or injury; involves self-employment; involves commuting from home to work that would be unreasonably difficult; requires that the customer join a union; is the subject of industrial disputation; or is unsuitable on the basis of moral, cultural, or religious grounds.
Austria	The unemployed can refuse a job offer, if he/she takes care of seriously ill relatives or if the job will be injurious to his/her health
Belgium	After six months, the notion of 'suitable job' is more easily defined by its opposite: a job is 'not suitable' if, for example, taking into consideration the commuting expenses, it doesn't net more than the amount of the unemployment benefit; it regularly necessitates night work (between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.), except where, because of his training and/or experience, the worker is predisposed to this job the salary offered doesn't comply with the legal provisions and regulations
Czech Republic	The unemployed can refuse a job offer with reference to serious personal or family reasons, for example obligation to take care of small children up to the age of three years, obligation to take care of seriously ill relatives, helpless, or partly helpless and older than 80 years.
Denmark	Whether a job is regarded as suitable is determined on the basis of a list of 15 valid reasons including regards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health</li> <li>• sudden change in transportation time</li> <li>• obligation to take care of small children or dying relatives,</li> <li>• in the process of retiring</li> <li>• working hours</li> <li>• working place abroad</li> <li>• production of arms</li> <li>• the spouse is moving for work</li> <li>• physical violence</li> <li>• violation of working agreements</li> </ul>
Estonia	Registration as unemployed will be terminated in case the unemployed refuses offered suitable work or employment training for the second time.
Finland	The unemployed can refuse a job offer, if the job will be injurious to his/her health or the wage in a part-time job would be lower than his/her unemployment allowance. The unemployed can refuse job offers with reference to a limited amount of other valid reasons.
France	He can refuse a job if it's not linked to his occupational area, if it's not compatible with his possibility of geographical mobility and if the offered wage is different from the usual wages in its region and profession.
Germany	The unemployed may refuse a job offer by the employment agency if he can give good reasons. This may, for instance, be the case if the unemployed is unable to accept the job offer for health reasons.
Ireland	They cannot refuse to accept any reasonable offer of employment
Island	No. Not if he/she is qualified and the employment is sufficient.
Italy	The unemployed cannot refuse to accept a job offer without losing her/his unemployed seniority.
Japan	See above
Latvia	The unemployed can refuse the job offer, if it is irrelevant to the unemployed health or the job can endanger health (this condition is also included in the term of

	appropriate job).
Lithuania	Unemployment benefit might be reduced to 50 percent if the unemployed refuses to accept a job offer within his/her qualifications and health status.
Malta	The unemployed can refuse a job offer, only if it does not match the original occupational areas of his / her preference, if it is a part-time job, or if the job will be injurious to his/her health (A medical certificate is needed to prove the latter). As stipulated in the Employment and Training Services Act, Section 13, para. 2: "When a person who is registered for employment refuses, without a good and sufficient cause, to avail himself of any suitable opportunity for employment or training offered to him by the Corporation, s/he shall lose his priority for referral for employment and shall be notified accordingly in writing." This means they will automatically be 'struck-off Part One of the unemployment register and moved to the second part of the register (the registration of persons who, without a good and sufficient cause, terminate employment or reject an opportunity of employment or training ...). This also means that they will no longer be eligible for unemployment benefits, and will not be given priority in job submissions until they are able to return to Part One after 6 months. Registrants who feel they have been struck-off unjustly are given a 15 day chance to appeal against the decision to the NEA (National Employment Agency).
Netherlands	In principle a benefit recipient has to accept every job offer. A person that rejects a job offer is to be sanctioned (reduction of the benefit)
Norway	The unemployed can refuse a job offer, if he/she is not mentally or physically capable to carry out the job. The unemployed do not have to accept job offers with lower wage than their unemployment benefit, except in extraordinary cases.
Portugal	Not in general. The unemployed can only refuse to accept a job offer if this one is not considered adequate to his/her profile (see reply to Question 3c) and/or causes serious prejudice to the person in question or to his/her family (see reply to Question 3e), or if there are valid reasons which may justify the refusal – namely, a situation of illness or temporary incapacity or disability – and may be corroborated.
Slovakia	Unemployed can refuse a job offer if he/she has noteworthy reasons for refusal. Noteworthy reasons are defined as follows: when the location and nature of employment of the spouse, or location and nature of employment location and nature of employment preclude the possibility to ensure escort for a child up to ten years of age to a pre-school establishment or to school, state of health of unemployed, qualified by medical assessing and state of health of close persons, qualified by statement of the attending physician or by decision of a health care facility.
Slovenia	The unemployed can refuse a job offer, if he/she takes he is seriously ill the job will be injurious to his/her health)
Spain	Yes, but the refusal of an adequate job offer entails sanctions.
Sweden	The unemployed can refuse a job offer for medical reasons, for certain family reasons (for example because of the working conditions of the husband or wife or because a person is dependant of the supervision of the unemployed person), because of lack of or high cost of public transport or own transport or because of problems finding accommodation. Also, if the income of the job offered is more than 10 % under the unemployed persons daily benefit, the unemployed can refuse to accept the job offered.
United Kingdom	A jobseeker is expected to take a job they are capable of doing. However, they can refuse to take a job if they have good cause to do so, for example a religious or conscientious objection, or if the job would adversely affect their health.
USA	All states' laws provide for disqualification from receiving UI benefits if an individual refuses a bona fide offer of suitable work. See answers to questions 3c – 3f for additional information on how states determine if an offer of work is suitable.

**Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding the extent of valid reasons for refusal**

Countries with a relatively large amount of valid reasons for refusal		Countries with average amount of restrictions		Countries with relatively few valid reasons for refusal
1	2	3	4	5
SWE,SVK		FRA,PRT,EST, CZE,JPN,MAL, UK,USA,AUS, FIN,DK,BEL		ITA,LAT,ESP, IRE,NLD,LIT, ISL,DEU,SLO, AUT,NOR

## 6. Sanctions applied in case of self-induced resignation from jobs. Number of weeks with suspension of unemployment benefits.

**Question: What kinds of sanctions are attached to self-inflicted unemployment as in case where the person in question quits a job?**

Australia	<p>Where a person has left any suitable employment voluntarily or has been dismissed for misconduct, a financial penalty applies to them. New claimants who leave a job without sufficient reason are subject to a 13 week waiting period before they can receive unemployment benefits. Current unemployment payment recipients who voluntarily leave part-time jobs are subject to the following financial penalties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· first breach of requirements within two years: rate reduction of 18 per cent of allowance for 26 weeks;</li> <li>· second breach of requirements within two years: rate reduction of 24 per cent of allowance for 26 weeks;</li> <li>· third and subsequent breach of requirements within two years: non-payment period of eight weeks.</li> </ul> <p>Where a person is receiving or claiming unemployment benefits and moves to a new place of residence with lower employment prospects, an exclusion period of 26 weeks may apply.</p> <p>No penalty can be applied if the person had a reasonable excuse for the behaviour that resulted in the penalty.</p>
Austria	<p>People, quitting a job without compelling arguments will not obtain unemployment benefit before 4 weeks after the beginning of unemployment?</p>
Belgium	<p>When he has resigned from his job (even where he did so with the approval of his employer) or in the case of unfounded absences, the unemployed can get a warning or be temporarily excluded from unemployment benefit (between 4 and 52 weeks); he may even be permanently excluded (except after a new period of work) if the job was abandoned with the sole view of staying a benefit receiving unemployed. Certain motives of abandonment may be considered legitimate, such as the education of the children, where it is established that the former employer is unwilling to rehire the person in question.</p>
Czech Republic	<p>People who have repeatedly within the last 6 months terminated their jobs without serious reasons, of their own will, or in that same time his/her employment was terminated for unsatisfactory working result or neglecting duties following from the employment, will not get material benefits nor benefits of social aid.</p>
Denmark	<p>People, quitting a job will not obtain unemployment benefit before 3 weeks after the beginning of unemployment</p>
Estonia	<p>An insured person does not have the right to receive an unemployment insurance benefit if the person left his or her previous work or service: 1) on the initiative of the employee, except if the employer violates the conditions of the employment contract provided for in the Republic of Estonia Employment Contracts Act; 2) due to a breach of duties of employment or service, loss of confidence, an indecent act or act of corruption; 3) by agreement of the parties.</p>
Finland	<p>People quitting a job without a valid reason will not obtain unemployment benefit before 90 days after the beginning of unemployment</p>
France	<p>People quitting a job will not obtain unemployment benefit before 4 months after the beginning of unemployment.</p>
Germany	<p>If a person has terminated employment thus causing unemployment deliberately or through negligence without good reasons, benefits will as a general rule be suspended for twelve weeks. In addition, the period of entitlement to unemployment benefit will be cut by the suspension time, at least by a quarter of the period of entitlement.</p>
Ireland	<p>People, leaving employment voluntarily may be disqualified for a period of up to 9 weeks from the date of leaving last employment.</p>
Island	<p>People quitting a job will not obtain unemployment benefit until 8 weeks after registration.</p>

Italy	People quitting a job will not obtain unemployment benefits unless they show that they were not paid, or that they suffered sexual harassment, or their tasks were changed.
Japan	A person quitting a job will not obtain unemployment benefit before 3 months after the day he/she is entitled to the unemployment benefit.
Latvia	If the person left the job itself, then the right to receive unemployment benefit comes into force only after 2 months from the time the unemployed has registered in the State Employment Agency.
Lithuania	An unemployed, who voluntarily quits a job or is dismissed for misconduct will receive unemployment benefits after three month of registration at the Labour exchange instead of eight days as usual.
Malta	When a person quits his/her job, a penalty of 6 months is applied. During this time, the person can still register for work with the Corporation, however only on Part two of the register thereby losing entitlement to benefits for the period of six months, and losing preference in submission to jobs (as those on Part One are given preference). Any person aggrieved by such a decision of the Corporation, may within fifteen days from the notification, appeal to the National Employment Authority (NEA).
Netherlands	Self inflicted unemployment is excluded from unemployment insurance.
Norway	People quitting a job – without an acceptable reason – will not obtain unemployment benefit before 8 weeks after the beginning of unemployment. The jobseeker has to be registered in The Public Employment Service in this period.
Portugal	Formally, there are no sanctions, but an absolute non-entitlement to unemployment insurance / social assistance benefits, when the unemployment situation is voluntarily self-inflicted by the person in question. There is no social protection in a voluntary unemployment situation.
Slovakia	Quitting a job has no impact on unemployment benefit entitlement.
Slovenia	N.A.
Spain	The unemployed is not entitled to unemployment benefits.
Sweden	If a person quits a job without a valid reason or has to quit a job because of improper behavior, the person shall be suspended from unemployment benefit 45 benefit days respectively 60 benefit days.
United Kingdom	Variable sanctions of between one week and 26 weeks can be applied if a jobseeker leaves their employment voluntarily without “just cause”. Just cause is not laid out in regulations but the jobseeker’s specific circumstances will be considered by an independent Decision Maker.
USA	All states’ laws have provisions to permit individuals who quit their jobs for good cause connected to the work to be able to receive UI benefits. Many states’ laws permit the payment of benefits to individuals who quit for good personal cause however the criteria for good cause vary. For example, some states consider it good cause if individuals quit to follow their spouses to a new location, or quit to accept better jobs. If the reason that individuals quit their job is not considered good cause by the state, the disqualification provisions vary. In most states, individuals are disqualified for the duration of their unemployment spell until they earn a specified amount of money (e.g. 10 times their weekly benefit amount). A few states disqualify these individuals for a specific number of weeks (e.g. 5-10 weeks). In addition, some states will reduce the amount of benefits individuals can received once the disqualification is lifted.

**Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding sanctions applied in case of self-induced resignation from jobs.**

0-4 weeks	5-9 weeks	10-14 weeks	More than 14 weeks	Suspension of unemployment benefits
1	2	3	4	5
SVK,DK,AUT	SWE,LAT,IRE, ISL,NOR	BEL,JPN,UK, FIN,LIT, DEU,AUS	FRA,CZE,MAL, USA,	PRT,EST,ITA, ESP,NLD

## 7. Sanctions applied when activation or job offers are refused by the unemployment

**Question: What kinds of sanctions apply to cases where the unemployed refuses to accept a job offer or to participate in ALMP's?**

Australia	<p>Job seekers who refuse to participate in a labour market programme without a reasonable excuse or refuse a suitable job offer are subject to the financial penalties listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· first breach of requirements within two years: rate reduction of 18 per cent of allowance for 26 weeks;</li> <li>· second breach of requirements within two years: rate reduction of 24 per cent of allowance for 26 weeks;</li> <li>· third and subsequent breach of requirements within two years: non-payment period of eight weeks.</li> </ul> <p>However, penalties imposed for failure to participate in a labour market program can be reduced in some circumstances if the unemployed person starts participating in the program at the earliest opportunity.</p>
Austria	The unemployed, who refuses to accept a job offer or to participate in ALMP's is disqualified in the insurance system for six weeks. If he has refused to accept a job offer or to participate in ALMP's two times in a year, he is disqualified in the insurance system for eight weeks.
Belgium	ALMP is run by the regional employment and training services. Benefit sanctions on the unemployed are not the responsibility of these services. A refusal to take up training can only lead to a negative evaluation when the effective job search efforts are reviewed. The control and pay body (ONEM-federal) is however dependent, in a certain way, on information transmitted by the regional employment services. There may be slight differences between regions in this matter.
Czech Republic	The unemployed, who without serious personal or family reasons refuses to accept a job offer or to enter into ALMP's loses the entitlement to unemployment benefits, they can even lose all rights following from their position of an applicant for a job (excluded from the list of job seekers).
Denmark	The unemployed, who refuses to accept a job offer is disqualified in the insurance system for 3 weeks. The unemployed, who refuses to participate in ALMP's is disqualified in the insurance system for 3 weeks.
Estonia	The payment of an unemployment insurance benefit shall be terminated if: 1) the insured person, without reason, refuses suitable work or refuses to participate in employment training or refuses other employment measures offered by an employment office, except community placement, which are provided for in the Employment Service Act; 2) the insured person, without reason, does not report to an employment office at the time specified by the employment office or does not prove search for work.
Finland	The unemployed, who refuses to accept a job offer or refuses to participate in ALMP's is disqualified in the insurance system for 60 days.
France	Formally, the unemployed who refuses to accept a correct job offer or a training program loses the entitlement to unemployment benefits. In practice, very few unemployed (0,1%) lose their benefits.
Germany	In the case of unemployed persons who refuse a job offer by the employment agency or participation in an integration programme without good reasons, benefits will be suspended for three weeks (first refusal), six weeks (second refusal) or twelve weeks (any subsequent refusal). Moreover, the period of entitlement to benefits will be cut by the number of days for which benefits are suspended.
Ireland	An unemployed person who refuses to accept a reasonable job offer may be disqualified from benefit for up to 9 weeks. The unemployed person who refuses to participate in an ALMP may also lose the entitlement to unemployment benefit /assistance for 9 weeks
Island	The unemployed, who refuses to accept a job offer is disqualified in the insurance

	system for 8 weeks. The unemployed, who refuses to participate in ALMP's may lose the entitlement to unemployment benefits.
Italy	The unemployed, who refuses to accept a job offer loses her/his unemployment seniority (see 3c).
Japan	If the unemployed refuse getting a job introduced by PESO without good reasons, benefits are stopped providing for a month.
Latvia	If the unemployed refuses the appropriate jobs two times, he/she loses the unemployed status and unemployment benefit respectively. If the unemployed (in compliance with the signed agreement with the State Employment Agency) without any legitimate reason does not attend employment activities, he/she loses the unemployed status and unemployment benefit respectively. If the unemployed does not sign the agreement with the State Employment Agency and does not have any obligation to attend employment activities, the sanctions have not been undertaken.
Lithuania	The refusal of an unemployed to participate in vocational training will be treated as the refusal of a job offer and the unemployed will not be registered in the Labour exchange until after six months.
Malta	When a person who is registered for employment refuses, without a good and sufficient cause, to avail himself of any suitable opportunity for employment or training offered to him by the Corporation, he shall lose his priority for referral for employment on part one and lose the eligibility for employment benefits for 6 months. In such a case s/he shall be notified accordingly in writing.
Netherlands	The refusal of a job offer leads to the termination of the benefit (in activation suspension of the benefit until compliance is possible).
Norway	Benefits are lost ordinarily for 8 weeks, as above.
Portugal	The non-justified refusal to accept an adequate job offer or to participate in adequate ALMP's will imply the loss of entitlement to the unemployment benefit (insurance or social assistance), as well as to other assistential allowances such as the Social Insertion Income - and, consequently, the end of its payment by Social Security.
Slovakia	The unemployed, who refuses to accept an offered job and who refuses to participate in ALMP without noteworthy reasons, is discarded from unemployment insurance system for 24 weeks and loses the entitlement to unemployment benefit.
Slovenia	NA
Spain	The unemployment benefit will be suspended for 3 months.
Sweden	The sanction for rejecting a suitable job offer without a valid reason or has caused, through his or her behavior, the employment not to happen or rejected an offer to participate in ALMP's, is a reduction a reduction of 25 % of the unemployment benefit during 40 benefit days. If it happens a second time, the reduction will be 50% during another 40 benefit days and if it happens a third time, the unemployed will not have the right to unemployment benefits until another work condition is fulfilled.
United Kingdom	Jobseekers will be sanctioned if they refuse to take up an option. All training options can become compulsory if an Adviser compels a jobseeker to attend one by issuing a Jobseeker's Direction. New Deal sanctions can be applied for refusing to take up the option, leaving the course/programme early, losing their place through misconduct. Good cause is applied when the Decision Maker decides whether or not to apply a sanction in these cases. If a jobseeker refuses suitable employment without good cause they will also be sanctioned for a period between 1 and 26 weeks.
USA	Concerning refusal of suitable work, in most states, individuals are disqualified for the duration of their unemployment spell until they earn a specified amount of money (e.g. 8 times their weekly benefit amount). A few states disqualify these individuals for a specific number of weeks (e.g. 1-10 weeks). In addition, some states will reduce the amount of benefits individuals can receive once the disqualification is lifted. With respect to training, individuals are generally ineligible only for the weeks that they were supposed to participate in services and did not.

**Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding sanctions applied when activation or job offers are refused by the unemployment**

0-4 weeks	5-9 weeks	10-14 weeks	More than 14 weeks	Suspension of unemployment benefits
1	2	3	4	5
DK,JPN,DEU,	AUT,SWE,IRE, NOR,UK,FIN, ,AUS	BEL,ESP	SVK,ISL,LIT, MAL	LAT,FRA,CZE, USA,PRT,EST, ITA,SLO, NLD

## 8. Sanctions applied when the unemployed repeatedly rejects activation or job offers.

**Question: Are there any special sanctions attached to cases where the unemployed, repeatedly, has refused job offers?**

Australia	Where an unemployed person repeatedly refuses suitable job offers, the sanction becomes harsher, with a non-payment period being imposed for the third and subsequent breach within a two year period.
Austria	See above
Belgium	See above
Czech Republic	There are no special sanctions; the unemployed will not obtain unemployment benefits (see above).
Denmark	The unemployed loses the entitlement to benefits if offers have been refused two times in 12 months.
Estonia	Registration as unemployed will be terminated in case the unemployed refuses offered suitable work or employment training for the second time.
Finland	The unemployed will not be entitled to obtain unemployment benefits if he/she has repeatedly refused to accept a job offers. The unemployment benefit may be granted again after an employment lasting at least 90 days.
France	See above
Germany	The time of benefit suspension on account of the unemployed refusing a job offer is extended, as described above, in the case of repeated refusal. Furthermore, the entitlement to benefits will cease if the unemployed, after qualifying for benefit, is responsible for the suspension of benefits for a total of at least 21 weeks.
Ireland	Same consequence as for initial refusal of job offer
Island	The unemployed is not entitled to unemployment benefits if he/she has refused to accept a job. He/she must work for 6 weeks to regain the entitlement to unemployment benefits.
Italy	No.
Japan	There are no restrictions other than mentioned above.
Latvia	In compliance with legislation, if the unemployed refuses the appropriate job two times, he/she loses the unemployed status.
Lithuania	The repeatedly refused acceptance of job proposal is treated as refusal of services of labour exchange office. Those persons can be registered in the Labour exchange only after six month.
Malta	No. Although ETC has been given the power to do so, no special sanctions are yet applied to cases where the unemployed, repeatedly, has refused job offers.
Netherlands	Not applicable because there is no second chance to refuse a job offer or an activation offer.
Norway	If the recipient, repeatedly, has refused job offers the sanctions will increase. First time, 8 weeks. Second time, 12 weeks if he/she has refused to accept a job offer two times in a year. Third time, 6 months if he/she has refused to accept a job offer three times in a year.
Portugal	No. However, every time this happens, the unemployed record is withdrawn from PES files.
Slovakia	No.
Slovenia	The unemployed will not be entitled to obtain unemployment benefits if he/she has refused to accept a job offer.
Spain	The unemployment benefit will be suspended for 6 months if the unemployed refuses a job offer or to participate in an ALMP twice. A third refusal entails the loss of the unemployment benefit.
Sweden	The reduction of the contribution increases each time a job or a measure is refused and by the third occasion within the same contribution period the right to benefit stops.
United Kingdom	Variable sanctions of between 1 and 26 weeks can be applied on a continuous basis if a jobseeker consistently refuses suitable employment without good cause.
USA	No, there are not.

**Points in relation to calculation of indicator regarding repeated refusals.**

No further sanctions in case of repeated rejections	The sanctions are more rigorous after the third rejection	The sanctions are more rigorous after the third rejection and the unemployed could lose entitlement to benefits	Suspension of unemployment benefits after second rejection	The unemployment benefit has already been suspended after the first rejection (see above)
1	2	3	4	5
IRE,JPN,MAL, SVK	AUS,AUT	BEL,DEU,ESP, LIT,NOR, SWE,UK	DK,EST,FIN, LAT	CZE,FRA,ISL, ITA,PRT,SLO, USA, NLD