



VICTORUPESI

Unity in diversity

**Vocational Innovation using Creative new Technologies
resulting in Upskilling Pathways for Social Integration**

NATIONAL REPORT LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE IN SPAIN

**CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT
TRADE UNIONS-FETICO**

Persons involved:

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**Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union**

FIRST PHASE OF THE RESEARCH: DESK RESEARCH

Confederation of Independent Trade Unions-FETICO has used different resources and literature to explore the topic of our target group (long-term-unemployed people aged 18-45) and their socio-labour inclusion, including the needs of social media to aid inclusivity.

FETICO has also developed connections with relevant stakeholders which enabled two other methods of research to be conducted for this study.

Results of the Desk Research

1. General overview

Long-term unemployed (LTU) are those people who have been unemployed for twelve months or more and who are registered at the Public Employment Services as job seekers.

Spain is one of the countries with the highest unemployment rates in the European Union. According to Eurostat data the unemployment rate in 2019 was 13.02% of the total labor force population, of those 55% were female and 45% were male.

The long-term unemployment rate in Spain is also among the highest in the European Union it was 44,3% of the total unemployed in 2019 (40,3% of the total women unemployed are LTU and 34,9% of the total men unemployed were LTU).

The **causes of unemployment in Spain** are structural and diverse:

- One leading cause is an economy based mostly on tourism, service and building activities;
- Spain has a high rate of precarious employment due to the widespread use of involuntary temporary work, part-time work and temporary agency work contracts often of short duration which create vulnerabilities and contributes to inequalities. Women are more represented in this kind of “vulnerable jobs” than men.
- The negative impact of low levels of education. Some deficiencies in the education system have been cited as some of the principal reasons behind the significant level of long term unemployment rates. Spain has one of the highest rates of high school drop outs and among the highest levels of low-skilled workers.
- Some structural changes as the impact of technological developments have created a mismatch between the skill requirements in the available jobs and workers’ current skills.
- The limited effectiveness of implemented employment policies.

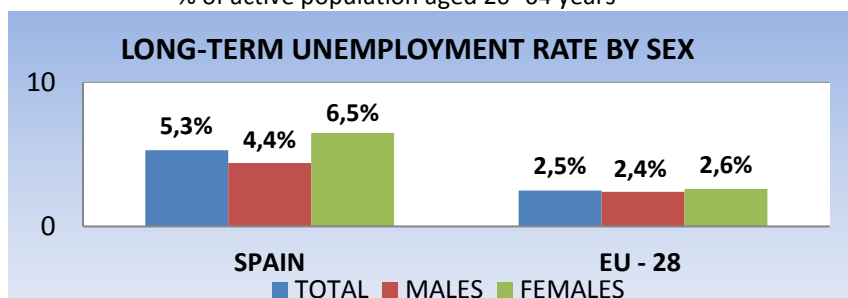
The **profile of the long-term unemployed people in Spain**:

The available statistical data confirms that there are population groups most vulnerable to suffering long-term unemployment as older workers and less skilled workers. Among the factors influencing the incidence to become long-term unemployed:

Gender

Figures showed the risk of long-term unemployment affects more women than men.

Long-term unemployment rate by sex in Spain in 2019
% of active population aged 20- 64 years

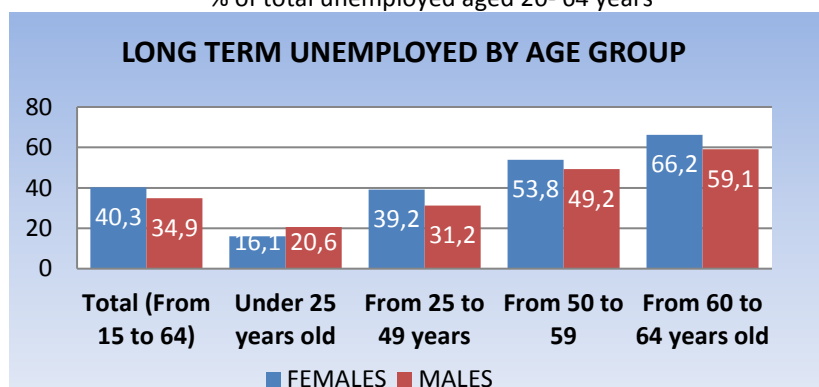


Source of data: EUROSTAT

Age

Older people face higher risk of remaining unemployed for long periods.

Long-term unemployment rate by age group in Spain in 2019
% of total unemployed aged 20- 64 years

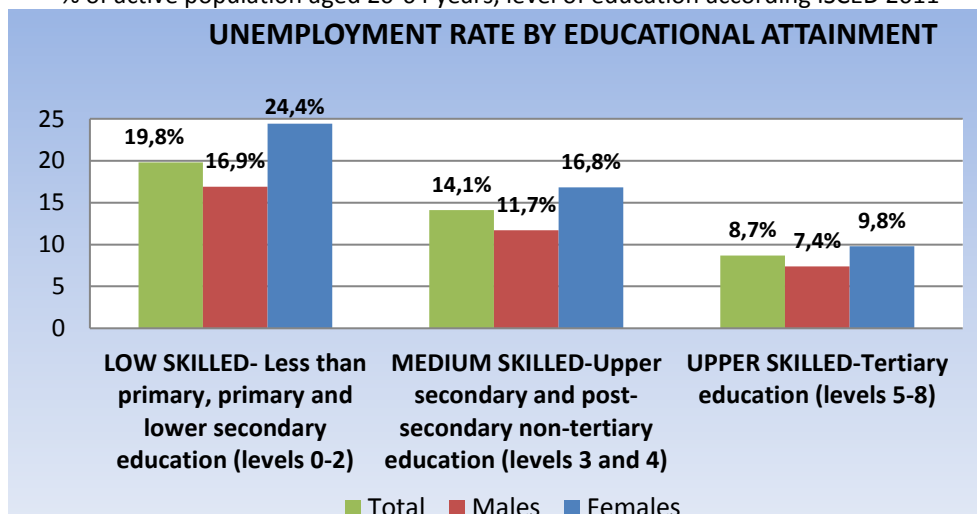


Source of data: EUROSTAT

Educational level

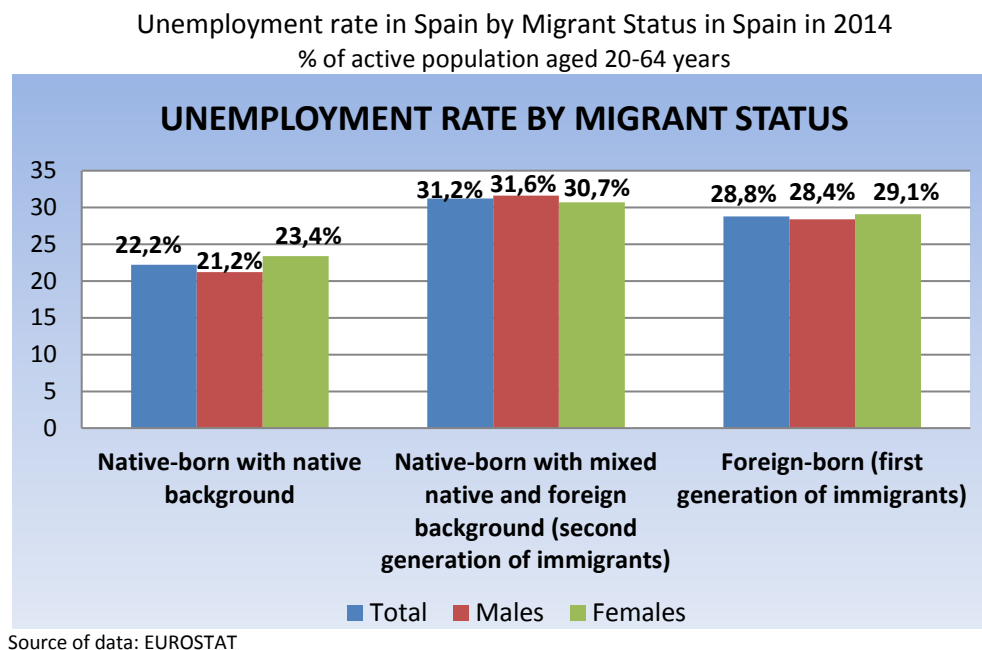
All educational groups are affected by LTU, but the risk is higher among people with low level of qualification or low-skilled.

Unemployment rate in Spain by level of education in Spain in 2019
% of active population aged 20-64 years, level of education according ISCED 2011



Migrant background and nationality

Data on LTU clearly show a link between immigrant status and the risk of being long-term unemployed



Job sector/ occupation.

Workers in the declining occupations and sectors more affected by economic crisis, as construction, experienced an increased risk of becoming long-term unemployed. Economic restructuring and structural employment shifts were intensified by the recession in Spain. Construction was the sector most deeply affected by job losses. Many of the jobs lost during the recent recession may never be recovered.

Geographical location

There are also differences in the risk of LTU according to geographical location or region of residence. Spain present pronounced regional differences, some of these differences reflect the varying levels of growth, the industrial structure and skills composition of their populations.

Other characteristics identified in Spain context as affecting by LTU include disabilities and disadvantaged minorities such as Roma people who are disproportionately affected by long-term unemployment.

Consequences of long-term unemployment:

Unemployment is a social, labour, productive and economic problem for a country and a big challenge for policymakers.

People who suffer LTU are exposed to economic poverty and social exclusion because the direct connection between LTU with other dimensions of social exclusion as income,

education, health, housing, social relationships or participation.

Several studies show that long-term unemployment is self-reinforcing and turns into a vicious circle. The probability of exit from unemployment tends to fall with duration due to factors such as depreciation of their professional skills, loss of motivation, and discrimination in the labour market.

2. National legislation, policies and initiatives supporting unemployed people in Spain.

Spanish basic **legal framework** on employment:

- The **Spanish Constitution of 1978**. The Constitution regulates in its articles 40 and 41 the employment policy and the Social Security assistance in case of unemployment.
- Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015 of 23 October approving the consolidated text of the **Statute of Workers**. It is the main law that regulates the rights of workers in Spain
- Royal Legislative Decree 3/2015 of 23 October approves the consolidated text of the **Employment Law**, which simplify the existing legal framework and facilitate employees in exercising their rights.

The Employment law established the **National Employment System** (SNE per Spanish acronym) as a set of structures, measures and actions to promote and develop employment policy. The SNE has the aim of improving the coordination and cooperation of the different public administrations involved in managing employment policies. The SNE is made up of the State Public Employment Service (SEPE per Spanish acronym) and regional public employment services.

- Royal Legislative Decree 8/2015 of 23 October, approving the consolidated text of the **General Social Security Law**.
- **The Law 8/2019, on urgent measures for social protection and against precarious work**

It establishes a specific system of incentives for companies employing LTU people. The company is required to maintain the employee hired for at least three years since the start date of the employment relationship, as well as the level of employment in the company achieved with the contract for at least two years. The incentive consist of a bonus of the company quota to Social security per worker hired of 1300€/year in case of hiring men and 1.500€/year in case of hiring women.

- **Law 5/2002, of 19 June, on Qualifications and Vocational Training.**

Vocational training is understood as the set of training activities that prepare people for the qualified performance of diverse occupations allowing them the access to employment.

The Vocational Training System established in 2002 offers two different approaches providing VET in Spain: vocational education and training (in the Education System) and Vocational Training for Employment (in the Labour System)

- **Law 30/2015 on Vocational Training for Employment.**

This training system falls under the remit of the Employment Ministry and the regions. It comprises vocational training for both employed and unemployed people aimed to provide

access and improvement of the competences and professional qualifications to adapt them to the needs of the labour market.

It is based on cooperation between labour authorities and social partners (employers and trade union organizations) thus constituting a framework based on the agreements reached between the social agents and the government.

The overall approach is designed to match and adapt the skills developed in the training system with the skills in demand in the labour market. This skills anticipation approach in Spain attempts to achieve this through the inclusion of stakeholders in the assessment of skills needs.

Policies supporting unemployed people in Spain.

Public administrations have two instruments to fight against the unemployment and its consequences:

Active Employment Policies are all those measures and programs that are carried out in Spain through the National Employment System to promote the entry or re-entry into the labour market of the long term unemployed.

Passive Employment Policies are all those measures that seek to maintain the income of the unemployed for as long as they do not have a job. They are benefits, subsidies and extraordinary aid paid to the unemployed.

In the sphere of state competence, the Government, through the Ministry of Employment and Ministry of Social Security, is responsible for the planning, coordination and control of employment policy in Spain. The regional governments are responsible for the development of active labour market policies in their respective territories.

Funding of the employment measures

The direct sources of funding are mainly:

- Funds from the Spanish Government Budget, which is included in the budget of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, to which the National Employment Service is attached;
- The vocational training for employment is funded through Spanish Social Security contributions set at 0.7% (0.6% from the company and 0.1% from the employee). Training programs for employees are subsidized or free (each employee can claim 180 hours of free training per year). Training programs for unemployed in Spain are free with no limitation of hours.
- Funds from the unemployment contributions of employees, since the Unemployment Protection System comprises unemployment benefits.

To these direct sources we must add the funds from the regions' own resources and those from the European Social Fund.

3. Existing strategies in the country dealing with the problem of long-term unemployment.

The National Strategy for Employment Activation 2017-2020

It was aimed to reduce the unemployment rate in Spain at 74% according to the targets defined by the European Strategy 2020.

Two specific groups of the working population are the priorities of Spanish Employment Strategy; the first is youth people with lower educational levels that are either inactive or unemployed. Another group deserving special attention is the long-term unemployed, with overrepresentation of workers over forty-five years.

Two specific Plans have been designed in the framework of the National Strategy aimed at these two priority groups: youth people and long-term unemployed people

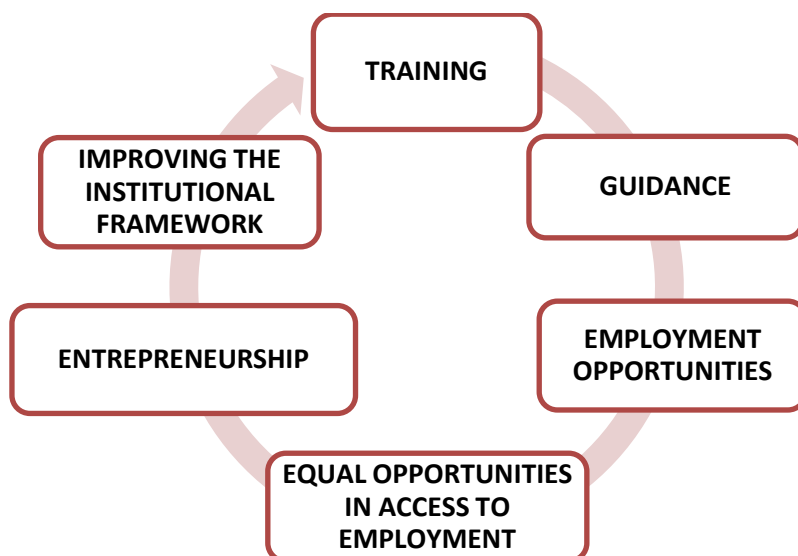
The Action Plan for Youth Employment 2019-2021 whose objective is to reduce youth unemployment.

The Plan for Preventing and Reducing Long-Term Unemployment 2019-2021, called in Spanish REINCORPORA-T PLAN. It is aimed at people who are particularly vulnerable in employment, in order to facilitate their prompt return to the labour market and prevent unemployed people from ending up in it.

Target Population: LTU people aged 30 and over who have been unemployed for 12 months or more in the last 18 months. The Plan includes preventive actions on:

- People over 45 who have lost their jobs.
- People made redundant in company restructuring processes.
- People with disabilities and women who are victims of gender violence.
- Vulnerable population in low-income households.
- Employed workers who do not reach the NMW (National Minimum Wage) threshold.
- People in domestic work and working as non-professional careers of dependent persons.
- People unemployed for 9 months in the last 18 months registered in the Special Farming Category

Both Plans are tackled comprehensively and with a cross-cutting approach including six priority axes of action to activate employment:



These Plans set specific targets for 2021 nevertheless as a consequence of the Pandemic caused by COVID-19, the indicators of these Plans have been adjusted to the new strategic framework proposed in the National Reform Programme, sent by the Spanish Government to the European Commission.

The Pandemic has generated a health, economic and social crisis that is impacting with great intensity in the employment and that has forced to take a series of measures that will determine the development of the employment policies in the coming years

4. Support measures for long-term unemployed people (social inclusion; economic and non-economic contribution, job market).

Support measures provided in Spain to promote the socio-labour inclusion of long-term unemployed include measures addressed to provide income support to unemployed people (passive measures) and those addressed to promote the entry or re-entry into the labour market of the long term unemployed (active measures)

4.1 Passive labour market measures targeted unemployed in Spain

The Spanish system of unemployment benefits consists of a contributory and non-contributory unemployment benefits.

Workers who have lost their job, and have paid social security contributions for at least 360 days during the last six years prior to unemployment are entitled to **contributory unemployment benefit**. The duration of this benefit ranges from a minimum of 120 days (for individuals who had worked a year) up to a maximum of 720 (for individuals who have worked 6 or more years).

In case of unemployed who have not paid enough social security contributions or fall into a specific category, they can opt for some of the non-contributory unemployment benefits that exist in Spain: **Non-contributory unemployment allowance** (if the person has exhausted contributory benefits but are still unemployed), or **Active integration income** if the person is long-term unemployed and are

between 45 and 65 years old, migrant workers returning from abroad who are older than 45, people with disabilities and victims of gender violence can also apply for it.

The **unemployment assistance** is an additional benefit that complements the contributory insurance and can be received if the person in question has an income of less than 75% of the Interprofessional Minimum Wage, under some concrete assumptions.

The beneficiaries of unemployment benefits or subsidies should be registered as job seekers in Employments services and comply with the “commitment to activity” understood as active job seeking.

4.2 Active labour market measures targeted at the unemployed in Spain:

Among the most important employment activation policies and measures are those aimed at preventing or fighting structural unemployment:

- ✓ Guidance and support measures in the job search.
- ✓ Training for employment to provide unemployed with training opportunities to improve or update their skills and to prevent skill obsolescence in a changing labour market
- ✓ Self-employment support programmes and measures to incentivize entrepreneurship.
- ✓ The creation of jobs in the public sector, for the benefit of the community or of social interest, in order to employ LTU people and serve as a bridge to access the labour market. It is often used to improve the employability of LTUs and provide them with skills and experience to later find employment in the private sector.

The Spanish System offers other employment incentives, not necessarily targeted to long-term unemployed as the **hiring subsidies that provide incentives for companies to hire disadvantaged groups or to promote open-ended contracts**. These incentives consisting mainly of a fixed amount or reductions in social security contributions especially for hiring unemployed persons included in groups such as women, young people aged 16-30, long-term unemployed, unemployed persons over the age of 45 and persons with disabilities.

Another important measure approved in Spain In 2020 is the **Minimum income guarantee system** which is defined as the set of non-contributory benefits that seek to ensure a basic level of economic sufficiency. The collection of a minimum income benefit entails a set of social and labour insertion measures as participation in employment insertion programs, social accompaniment programs for the development of inclusion itineraries. As a general trend, it should be noted that the minimum income systems that have been integrated into general social protection systems, together with pensions or health care, have become a tool to combat poverty and support employment.

5. Main challenges for long-term unemployed

There are still many challenges to be tackled to improve the employability of long-term unemployed. LTU people face multiple barriers to labour market integration or re-integration:

- Lack of information about the labour market.
- Lack or outdated of the skills needed in the current job market. People with low-skills are more likely to engage in informal employment.
- Lack of available jobs suited to their qualifications and professional experience.
- Chronification of unemployment situation due to the longer people is out of employment the less likely they are to find a job again.
- Discrimination in the labour market based on age, gender, cultural background, etc... Long-term unemployment is also regarded as a bad signal by employers and therefore limits people's hiring chances.
- Erosion of skills, confidence and motivation as well as a decline in social relations during extended unemployment spells.
- Risk of becoming discouraged and falling into inactivity as a result of unsuccessful job search.
- Long-term unemployment can negatively affect people's physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing of job seekers, leading to a vicious cycle
- Insufficient support from employment services to the long-term unemployed which do not address its root problems.
- Lack of investment limiting job creation and a lack of responsiveness in the labour market.

SECOND PHASE OF THE RESEARCH

The second part of this research consisted of focus groups and in-depth interviews.

FOCUS GROUPS

The aim of the discussion groups was to understand the training needs of long-term-unemployed people in Spain, specifically the needs in transversal skills as digital competences.

Two focus groups have been organized through video conference in Zoom platform:

FG1- was held on 17th March

Participants: long-term unemployed people, 2 of them older than 45 years old and two of them from 20 to 30 years old.

FG2- was held on 14th April

Participants: experts from relevant institutions dealing with training and employment, job counseling, socio-labour integration of unemployed people and other social workers. Some of these experts took also part in the in-depth interviews which are detailed below.

A set of questions, adapted to the two groups participants in the discussions (LTU and experts) were set to allow us to identify ideas and opinions for a better understanding of:

- The training needs in terms of upskilling and reskilling unemployed to help them to enter or reenter the labour market.
- The current gaps in training provision offered by training centers and the skills demanded by companies that recruit employees.

In addition to training we have also tried to identify other supporting measures that are needed to promote the employability of long-term unemployed.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The interviews took place from mid January to mid April through video conference and face-to-face meetings.

In order to recruit people for these in-depth interviews we got in contact with more than 40 VET providers, centers that provide information, advice and guidance to help unemployed people to enter or reenter the labour market, social workers and long-term unemployed associations and support groups.

A diverse range of people belonging to our target group and professionals have been interviewed. This allowed us to collect detailed data to identify training needs and problems for our target group to build social capital by developing professional skills.

Interviews have been conducted by a member staff of Fetico and involved a total of 14

participants: 3 long-term unemployed, 6 experts in training and employment working in VET Centers, 2 experts in job guidance, 2 social workers from NGO's working with unemployed people and 1 company owner from service sector.

Two different questionnaires have been designed: one for unemployed people and one for specialists. The questionnaires include a set of questions, different for both groups, in the following sections:

1. Policies, programs and initiatives that promote access to training and employment in Spain.
2. Support measures addressed to the long-term unemployed.
3. VET system in Spain and the training provision offered by VET centers to improve employability of long-term unemployed people.
4. Identification of training needs in transversal competences. Interviews are required to select among the competences proposed in a check list what they consider are more important to improve employability of LTU people.
- 5: Identification of training methodologies more suitable to provide training programs aimed at LTU people.
6. Challenges or difficulties for the target group to access the labour market and for the professional centers in the process of supporting LTU people.

FINDINGS

In answer to the research questions raised in the interviews and the focus groups conducted, the main findings from this research phase are as follows:

Training provision and other measures offered by vocational centers, employment services and social services to improve employability of long-term unemployed people.

There is a big offer of training programs and courses addressed to our target group but these courses not always are able to accomplish the objective of facilitating the access to employment. There is a mismatch between the training offer by vocational centers and the competencies required in the labour market.

It is necessary to match skills and jobs this means to adapt the training offer with the needs of the companies that recruit employees.

But LTU have the feeling that “only training is not enough to find a job”

According to the opinions given by the experts and the unemployed who have participated in the survey the employment services are not working in the active search for human capital that connects jobseekers with employers. These employment offices provide standardized services that not take into account the specific needs of each unemployed person. It makes the unemployed people do not use these services and access to information about employment through other channels, mainly on the Internet in specialized websites and on-line platforms.

It is important that employment services offer more tailored service of guidance based on individual's needs of up-skilling or re-skilling detected through assessment on people's skills. This initial assessment would allow them to develop individual training itineraries for reintegration to job and adapting the existing demand of job to the potential candidates.

Some experts from social services with experience in working with LTU also point out the convenience of providing accompaniment to these groups during the training process, a kind of “social mentoring” especially in the case of people suffering from chronic unemployment who have a higher degree of vulnerability. Accompaniment, on the one hand, didactic or pedagogical (to support them in training aspects or topics in which they may have more difficulties) and, social (many times the parallel problems they live - housing, health, family responsibilities - make it difficult or impossible for them to carry out training actions successfully)

Chronic unemployment situations are only preventable through coordinated measures between employment services, social services and training centers financed with public resources.

Training needs detected.

Based on the feedback received from participants in focus groups and interviews some training needs have been detected in the area of soft skills or transversal competences which are defined by ET 2020 as skills “relevant for individuals as citizens and in employment in today's varied and unpredictable career paths”.

A checklist of transversal competences divided in areas have been provided to the participants in the interviews in order to know which are considered most important competences LTU people need to have to improve their employability. These are the most valued skills:

DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS	
<p>Digital competence refers to the confident and critical usage of the full range of digital technologies for information, communication and basic problem-solving in all aspects of life.</p> <p>According to the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens(DigComp) developed by the European Commission these competences can be divided in five areas of knowledge. From these five areas interviewees have selected only areas 1 and 2 for the purpose of training LTU people.</p>	
AREAS	COMPETENCES
Information and data literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content. - Evaluating data, information and digital content - Managing data, information and digital content
On-line communication and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interacting through digital technologies - Sharing through digital technologies - Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies - Collaborating through digital technologies - Netiquette - Managing digital identity

SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS
These are competences that help us to develop positive relationships with the individuals we interact with.
COMPETENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication skills: written, verbal and non-verbal expression, use of languages, etc. - Teamwork - Motivation and Commitment - Initiative, autonomy and proactivity - Problem solving - Innovation and creativity

SELF-AWARENESS AND, ADAPTABILITY SKILLS
These are key competences for the world of work
COMPETENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-awareness, knowing their competencies, strengths and weaknesses will help LTU

to identify skills they may be lacking

- Flexibility and adaptability to changes
- Motivation in learning and constant upgrade of their skills
- Capacity to know how to identify the labour market needs and prepare them to meet these future skills needs.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

These are organizational and planning skills

COMPETENCES

- Time planning, organizing and management, as the process of divide your time between specific activities
- Resources planning, organizing and management
- Information searching, organizing and management
- Leadership

Methodological aspects of training:

The design of training programs addressed to LTU should take into consideration the following methodological aspects

- The training methods considered more suitable for this target group are those mix methods or blended learning that combine in classroom and on-line classes.
- The duration of the courses should be appropriate to the training content but they should not be very long, with a maximum duration of 2-3 hours a day preferably in the morning and not every day of the week to be able to conciliate family training with family responsibilities or with active job search.
- Training should be very practical promoting the used of work-based learning approaches as apprenticeships or traineeships.
- Some transversal competences considered key to access the labour market must be included in all training programs or courses, is what experts call "Modules 0" as: digital skills, knowledge of the job market, self-knowledge, etc.

Flexible training is essential to adapt the programs and the learning environments to the diverse circumstances of target groups.

Partners should be aware that **training needs are different for each participant** and training programs should be planned accordingly.

Long-term unemployment affects a variety of people very diverse due. Due to heterogeneity of our target group depending on aspects as age, gender level of education, cultural background, migrant background, geographical location and degree of vulnerability, it is important that

training is designed according to the specific needs and the characteristics of the different groups of unemployed.

Partners should provide participants with **clear instructions** on

1. Learning objectives (in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes)
2. Purpose and goals of the training
3. Learning methodology
4. Time frame and course duration
5. Training program (by modules)
6. Learning plan
7. Labour opportunities for participants after attending training

Other relevant findings:

- Experience suggests that the diversity of situations that present our target group requires intensive, comprehensive approaches and tailored support services adapted to the needs of each person. Standardized services and single, isolated measures (e.g. training or wage subsidies alone) tend to be ineffective.
- It is important highlight the need for prevention, individualized support and partnerships with employers and other institutions to effectively support LTU people.
- According to the opinion of the target group it will be very convenient to improve the skills and competences of employment counselors and job orientation specialist from employment services.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very severe impact on our target group.

After years of gradual recovery from previous crisis the Spain's economy is once again in recession. The COVID-19 crisis has fully affected to economic sectors that had too much weight in the Spanish economy as commerce, hospitality or tourism which have been greatly affected by the restrictions generated by the pandemic.

The Pandemic has seriously affected employment since it has caused a great destruction of employment in the strategic sectors. The crisis has further aggravated the situation of the long-term unemployed in Spain, which was previously complicated.

The circumstances that accompany long-term unemployment, such as the depletion of benefits, the limitation of economic income, the lack of social protection, the loss of self-esteem or isolation, have become even more accentuated.

This fact, together with a sudden digitization of the economy and the work has widened the digital gap of unemployed people to cope with the challenges of the digital market.

According to the opinion of experts who have taken part in this research phase to mitigate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 it is necessary an urgent reactivation of the

economy that does not leave behind the most vulnerable groups. Active employment policies and other support measures will be critically important in connecting unemployed with emerging employment niches, strengthening their digital skills and competencies and enabling a balanced transition to digitization.

How we are going to use these findings?

When developing the training materials, the partners will ensure that the learning objectives and contents are connected with the needs of the post Covid labour market. The must be clear and easy to follow by our target groups, consisted of all the relevant information needed to use different social media platforms, and also included information on safety and security when using the platforms.

When training started, each partner organization will ensured that flexible training options are given to suit those groups involved, and the online learning platform was also used to supplement the training, in case any information needed reiterating.

Other ways of using the findings

- ☐ To influence political decision-making regarding employment and training.
- ☐ To carry out improvement actions in the training programs that are being implemented.
- ☐ To program and develop training actions aimed at LTU more adjusted to the skills needs demanded by companies and tailored to the qualification needs of our target group.
- ☐ To develop job placement programs that respond to the needs expressed by the experts in this field.
- ☐ To become aware of the need to evaluate the results of the employment policies implemented and introduce continuous improvement measures.

The importance of diversity management!

VICTORUPESI consortium consist out of very divers partners serving very divers beneficiaries. This represents a micro mirror of the societies each of our beneficiaries are living in and is really important to build the ground for holistic approaches.

Reasons for having holistic approach about unemployment in Spain:

Unemployment is an economic and social problem for a society whose causes are diverse and complex. When we speak about long-term unemployed people we refer to very diverse group of people with a different degree of vulnerability depending on their situation and circumstances. Because of this diversity it is important to have a “personalized perspective” avoiding the generalization and standardization

The consequences of long-term unemployment in affected people are also diverse because the direct connection between LTU with other dimensions of social exclusion as income, education, health, housing, social relationships or social participation

Due to this complexity in the target group, in the causes and in the consequences of long-term unemployment it is important to focus on this problem from a holistic, comprehensive and integrative approach that takes into account the individual and Social Dimension.

The importance of digital skills!

The world is changing significantly, technology advancing attain incredible speed and it is important that we are not lagging behind these changes.

Reasons for having good digital skills in Spain:

- These skills are essential in the field of education and training, in job search processes, in the work environment and for having an active participation in society.

The importance of digitization in the job search processes is growing. The Internet has become the window to the world of work. For this reason, it is key to equip our target group with digital skills and be present in digital channels and social networks through the creation of professional profiles on networks such as LinkedIn, the use of job portals, the creation of a personal brand in search engines or the training to have video interviews, among others.

- The number of jobs that require these type of skills is increasing every day. After the Covid-19 pandemic, digital skills are more relevant than ever. The pandemic has transformed our lives. Digital technologies now support effective participation in all key areas of our life and work.

The pandemic has generated greater vulnerability risk groups as LTU people. The digital gap is even deeper than before and the most vulnerable people are the main victims of this gap.

- Digitization is positioned as one of the key levers for economic recovery and modernization of the economy, increasing productivity and closing social and territorial gaps. This explains the recent Strategy approved by the Spanish Government in June 2020 “Spain Digital 2025” that will focus its objectives on promoting the country's digital transformation. Among the strategic axes defined in this Plan is “Strengthen the digital skills of workers and of citizens. The goal is that in 2025 80% of people have basic digital skills and that half of them are women.

The need to improve digital skills, as a key competence for accessing to the job market, is an issue raised by all the experts, companies and unemployed people who have participated in this phase of the research.

The overviews of the political context in each of the partners countries

The desk research is showcasing the different policies, programs, initiatives and strategies

which promote the access to employment and training in Spain and that address the problem Long-term unemployment.

In this section we are going to present what is the opinion of our target group and experts in training and employment on this regulatory framework.

When asked to the experts whether they consider that active employment policies, as well as programs and measures aimed at promoting the labour insertion of long-term unemployed people in Spain are effective, most of them consider that this measures are effective in general terms, although taking into account the high unemployment rate among this target group there are some aspects to improve for increasing the effectiveness of these policies.

Among the improvement aspects pointed out by the experts are the following:

- Carry out continuous evaluation of the results of these policies, programs and actions that should provide with information and data to determine compliance with the employability objectives achieved with their implementation.
- Increase work-based learning approaches and training programs with hiring commitments from companies.
- Increase incentives for companies to hire long-term unemployed.
- Employment policies should be focused not only on reducing unemployment rate but also on achieving quality jobs, enhancing employment stability and maintaining favorable working environment and conditions.

Regarding the opinion of the LTU people on employment policies and programs aimed at labour insertion, they have a more negative opinion than experts, probably because they analyze the effectiveness of these policies taking into account their own personal situation as unemployed. They state that the information and guidance they receive is neither sufficient nor adequate. They consider that employment public services have highly bureaucratic processes, and do not have the right professionals to provide personalized guidance and support that respond to their needs.

In relation to the measures addressed to provide income support the unemployed people in the form of subsidies, benefits and other economic and social, our target group consider they are not enough. They point out that other aids such as psychological help and assistance should be provided, since long-term unemployment situations affect people emotional stability.

The overviews of the funding of vocational education in each of the partners countries

Vocational Training in Spain is free for unemployed people, offered by private training providers but financed with public funds. The only condition for accessing to these programs for unemployed is to be registered in the Public Employment Service as job seeker.

Among the issues raised by experts in vocational education and training are:

- The need to increase the public funds assigned to the training for employment to allow training providers to update the training provision for adapting it to the current needs of the post-Covid economy and labor market that will be based mainly on green and digital economy.
- More flexibility in programming, planning and management of programs reducing the bureaucracy imposed by the Public Administration is necessary to improve efficiency.
- More collaboration between political actors, economic actors and vocational centers also helps to improve training and employability of LTU.

According to the opinion of some experts private financing for training should be increased mainly by large companies and corporations, so that they contribute to a greater extent to economic recovery and boosting of employment.

The overviews of the local companies and industries available to hire our beneficiaries in each of the partner countries

The economic sectors and occupations with the best employment prospects in Spain are:

- Logistic and transport in occupations as warehouse assistant order preparers, deliverers, carriers.
- Service sector in occupations as cleaning worker, telephone operator, commercial agent, sales representative, office worker, customer service operators,
- Health and care services sector in which occupations more in-demand are doctors, nurses, geriatric staff, home-care services.
- ICT sector: software developer, software analyst, data analysts, ICT Consultant.

The sectors of commerce, hospitality and tourism, which employ the majority of the employed population in Spain, are those more affected by Covid 19 Pandemic. In the past year the interruption of activity have increased jobless numbers by 710,500, a rise of 21.8% compared to 2019.

In the process of reactivation of economy it will be more necessary than ever to push employment measures as incentives to companies for hiring people, the creation of public sector jobs or the collaborations between public-private sectors institutions as mechanism for employment creation.