

# THE EXTENSION OF OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AND THE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract:**

*European labor market offers many opportunities for workers, but to benefit from it, they must be mobile between different jobs, as well as between regions and states. The deployment of a viable economical activity supposes the performance capitalization of competence, experience and knowledge. The career is centering on accumulated experience in different jobs and occupations and not on the evolution in inter organizational/hierarchy structure. Appreciating the seniority as a competence generator source offers perspectives to be capitalized among competences formal confirmed in the preparation level.*

**Key words:** *development, employment, mobility, skills*

**JEL classification:** *J61, J62, J68*

## **Introduction**

The need to evaluate the impact of human activity in its content with its main scale of consumer and producer (especially of natural resources) had become more and more obvious.

The work market mostly in the transition perspective to knowledge economy represents the meeting place, space of social partners with the purpose of dealing knowledge's that serve at identifying, solution, resolving, creating new knowledge, educating the participants and dissemination experiences and results generated by multidimensional problems (with facet corresponding to each actor) that are determinate by multifactor.

Mobility figures have been static for years. Only four per cent of European citizens have ever moved to another Member State and even within Member States, only about half of the European workforce changed their employer during the last decade. It is believed that a higher degree of mobility might help to solve the labor market paradox that exists within Europe whereby some regions experience chronically high unemployment rates whilst others cannot find enough candidates to fill their many (and increasing) job vacancies. Two mechanisms can help to bridge these gaps between supply and demand: economic restructuring can move jobs from regions with labor shortages to regions with a high labor reserve; or, instead of moving the companies to where the unemployed workers are, these workers can be encouraged to migrate to the regions where more jobs are available.

Workers' mobility is closely linked with competence and qualification development. Mobility enhances competence development while, in turn, people with a broader set of competences and qualifications have better chances on the labor market.

Although only a tiny percentage of the European population is involved in cross-national geographical mobility, most employees change jobs at some stage in their careers, with three out of four employees in the EU reporting that they have changed employer at least once. Mobility rates drop to a lower level when only recent job changes are taken into consideration: 32% of all employees have changed jobs during

the last five years, and 8% have changed employer in the last year. About 40% of all European employees expect to change their employer in the next five years. Although companies naturally wish to retain their best employees, they are generally aware of the benefits a mobile workforce can offer them. They therefore develop opportunities for their staff to change function from time to time. In some companies, there are systematic policies in place to ensure that staff change jobs regularly within the company. In a number of large companies, it is possible to identify policies that might be termed “flexicurity at company level”. Under such policies, employees are expected to change jobs periodically within the company but, in return, are guaranteed lifelong employment.

### **New European model of work market**

The European model has as target the achievement of a labor market with a high level of occupation, more flexible but in the same time, without renouncing at the fundamental and traditional principles of solidarity and social protection/social rights and with the main contribution of political factor.

In the new context a better function of labor market impose the establishment and fulfilling of concrete objective of common interest, not only on national level, but also on common one, on short, medium and long term by the representative of demand and offer, each member state (national government) having an important role.

So the European work market wants to accomplish the following demands:

- to be attractive;
- to be efficient;
- to be opened to everyone;
- to be accessible for everyone;
- to assure the development and utilization of labor force potential.

All this aspects previously mentioned have a common point: quality. Even if can be obvious that durable development implies a series of transformations we find it useful to point out aspects related by the quality associated and determined by the durability demands and especially by those regarding the quality on the conceptual area of labor market.

### **Competence and mobility**

The change had become the most obvious legality that manages many aspects of human activity. The evolution means the development in a discontinuous way through transition, jumps that take place between successive situations. Understanding the new aspects that determine the trends generated by change generator factors, meaning the description of possible, probable and normative situations, on one hand as a static expression of the phenomena and on the other hand the transition as variation of a time characteristics, as a dynamic aspect, characterized by speed and way primary.

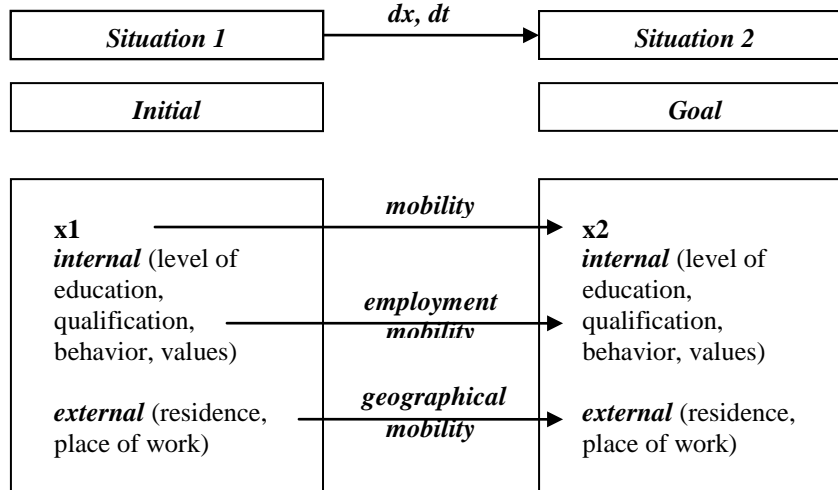
Under the mark of change, along with the description of the situations, characteristics often imposed in theory and in practice is filled the phenomena description more and more and with many dynamic aspects.

As concerning the work market we refer at the mobility of work force under two aspects:

- Geographical mobility, meaning the capacity of the labor force to move in space, manifested through changing the work place and/or of the domicile at some distance from the initial position in certain time period. This ability of the human being and of its family to vary the geographical coordinates describes the movement capacity.
- Occupational mobility as the labor force capacity to transform as a consequence of ascendant transition from a level of education, competence, of inferior behavior to another level successively higher.

**Figure no. 1 Transition**

$$ST = dx/dt$$



x = the plan, the characteristic in which takes place the transition  
 x1 = level of the characteristic for situation 1  
 x2 = level of the characteristic for situation 2  
 ST = speed of transition

Assuming we refer at a person as a system we can say:

- Qualification, educational level obtained characterize the energetic intern level. The transition among two different situations takes place as a consequence of absorption capacity of the system (as quantity and quality of information on time unit);
- Potential, availability, opening, moving acceptance, residence change is called the extreme energetic level and represents geographical mobility.

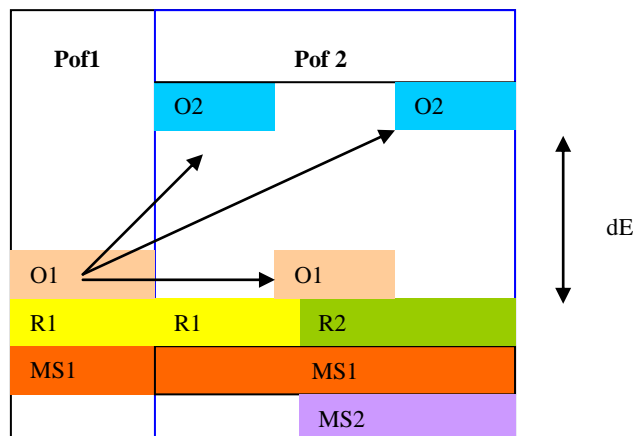
In the European Community the mobility presents the following situations:

- Regional mobility, in the same occupation, with a spatial movement on an x km distance. The new is that initial region and the final one can be in different member states;
- Moving in another occupation but without modifying the domicile;
- Moving in another occupation, in another region (the final region can belong to a member state).

There is a close bond between geographical mobility and occupational one with a strong determining accent generated by the geographical variable degree of recognizing the professional qualifications. By transiting to international economy and to knowledge economy, economical growth is possible through increasing the brut VAT achieved by service export. In this way, along with the flexibility imminence of work market is added the liberalization necessity to supply services. The supplying service liberalization has as implicit consequence the flexibility of the labor market and in this way is involved the system reform of recognizing the professional qualifications on the purpose of encouraging the recognize of the qualifications and simplifying the administrative procedures.

We can see in the next figure, acknowledging the qualification for the moved person by the host state represents the only way of display an economical activity in a member state.

**Figure no. 2** *The acknowledge of the qualification between member states*



Pof = place of work  
 O = occupation  
 R = region  
 dE = education, skills added to the initial level  
 MS1 = original member state  
 MS2 = host member state  
 1 = initial situation  
 2= final situation

The economic growth is achieved and sustained through economic activity. The complex encouragement to develop this activity includes the third sector, a sector with a huge potential yet not exploitable and the other sectors modernized.

Attracting persons with enterprising spirit is not made only from the member states of the European Union. The opening, already announced, of the labor market it will offer perspectives for qualified persons from any third state, out of European Union, again with the only condition, that of evolving an activity based on a qualification recognized by the host state.

This new perspective of the European policy, completely subordinated to the occupation idea, gives a new value and a new meaning to citizen status. The work market integration offers the resident right associated with a lot of civil rights and obligations obtained progressively by the resident.

European Commission elaborated “The action plan for competence and mobility”. The free movement of the works between member states represents one of the Council responsibilities, stipulated in the Treaties, guaranteed to work in practice. Along with the free movement between regions/countries through acknowledging the qualifications it can fill this liberty through the free movement between work places and/or between occupations (developing a European career).

The importance of achieving free movement for the persons and of the market flexibility imposed, on European level, a “system for recognizing the professional qualifications more simple and clear” that includes:

- General recognizing of professional qualification system. It is based on the recognizing mutual/reciprocal principle of respective qualification in both states (origin and host).
- Automatic recognizing of qualification confirmed through professional experience.

- Automatic recognizing system for specific professions: doctors, nurses, dentists, surgeon vet, midwife, pharmacist and architects.

Innovative education implies the orientation through practice, concrete together with surpassing the membership and form, competence central sustained by the innovation capacity, understanding, adaptability to new through continuous learning abilities development along the life in formal and informal surrounding. The extension of occupational mobility and the competence development reviles new simultaneous demands and priorities, with benefic effects over the labor market, as follows:

- The access to education and forming, free for base competences no matter the age;
- Encouraging the students, especially girls that study mathematics, science and technology;
- Improving the general level of education, especially the integration of handicapped people in education, with learning difficulties and immigrants from ethnic minority communities;
- Creating a better interface between education world and work world. The creation of a network that can assure the communication between the private sector and educational one;
- The deployment of professional forming programs organized by the employer especially for the older workers and rendering incentives for employees and employers so they can achieve these objectives;
- Giving awards to the companies and organization from public sector that fill in strategies for an innovating education and for learning lengthwise life;
- Identifying the labor market demands and creating detailed competence profiles;
- Developing a European frame from evaluating and recognizing learning non-formal and informal and of work experience.

Insuring and guaranteeing residence rights, occupation and social security rights for any person no matter the origin country status offers extremely attractive perspectives for stimulating the geographical mobility. The participation on labor market should not affect the stability of the demographic system. Entering and exiting the work market should be continuous in dynamic flux – supplying without discontinuous human resources so that can be assured the optimal level of occupation for present and future function of social mechanism: meaning to achieve the inter-generative transfer and the changing generation, regenerating and restoring the labor force without conflicts and major unbalances.

### **Conclusions: improving the quality of workers' mobility**

The European Commission has a clear policy goal of fostering workers' mobility in line with the Lisbon strategy. This quantitative goal, however, needs to be complemented by qualitative ambitions: Europe does not just need more workforce mobility; it also needs to develop instruments that foster higher quality mobility. For the overall goal to be successful, Europe has to invest in making sure that transitions on the labor market take place smoothly and represent a step in the direction of getting people into jobs that suit them and contribute positively to their career development, as well as serving the needs of employers' for a good match.

In enhancing the competence development of their human capital companies have developed innovative human resource management approaches that allow them to formulate individualised personal development plans for their employees. These competence-based models enable training activities to be properly targeted and support the internal horizontal or vertical mobility of individual employees. Competence development is thus closely linked to functional mobility within the company.

Flexicurity exists at company level and describes the situation whereby the employee receives work(life) security and the employer functional flexibility. Companies try to guarantee lifetime employment for employees who perform well, but in return expect these employees to accept functional changes within the company from time to time. The attractiveness of such employment with its possibility for intra-company mobility might mean that there will only be a moderate level of mobility between companies in Europe, but this does not mean that workers are immobile: they remain mobile within this stable employer-employee relationship and, in companies that are transnational in scope, may also move between countries whilst still retaining employment with the same employer.

Company perspectives still dominate the competence development of employees. However, transitional labor markets are better served by trans-company initiatives that give workers more objectivity and choice in managing their careers properly. Here, the further development of career guidance initiatives at a sectoral or economy wide level can play a useful role. These can be complementary to company-specific competence development strategies and can raise the quality of any subsequent mobility that does take place whether within or between companies.

Another strategy to ensure better quality mobility is investment in the transparency of the qualification structure of the educational systems and of the workforce. This helps people decide where to go by providing them with a reliable basis for estimating the value of their competences, and also helps companies to find the right person for the right job more easily. The development of the European Qualifications Framework, with its capability of benchmarking national, sectoral and company-based qualification systems offers a good example of such transparency. This toolkit will not necessarily lead to more workers' mobility, but can engender improvements in the quality of the mobility that does take place.

Although workers' mobility usually takes place within national borders, there are workers who do move to another country to take up employment. In order to make such international mobility easier, both employees and employers require a better harmonisation of the social security, health and taxation systems in Europe. Long distance workers' mobility could become an easier step if Member States could provide a "one-stop-shop" to provide clear information on these institutional regulations as well as providing information on language courses, local facilities, how to find housing, schools, and the cultural customs and traditions of the new region.

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