

# EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC PROGRAMMES FOR ZERO UNEMPLOYMENT



The coinciding challenges in EU politics, combating the climate crisis and pursuing a just transition, are a call to explore new concepts that help create decent employment and strengthen the social economy.

The job guarantee approach is a policy instrument that offers a response that can be implemented on a municipal or broader scale. Variations of such local employment initiatives have already been implemented in several places in the world, including in the EU, such as in Austria, France and Greece.

To exchange knowledge and discuss broader collaboration, a coalition was established in 2022, bringing together European actors from civil society, trade unions, politics and academia. An online survey was conducted in early 2023 to explore intersecting experiences with (un)employment and labour market developments in the context of the current crises from the perspectives of the participants. In addition, respondents were briefly introduced to the concept of the Job Guarantee, i.e., guaranteed quality jobs through public funding, and asked for their opinions.

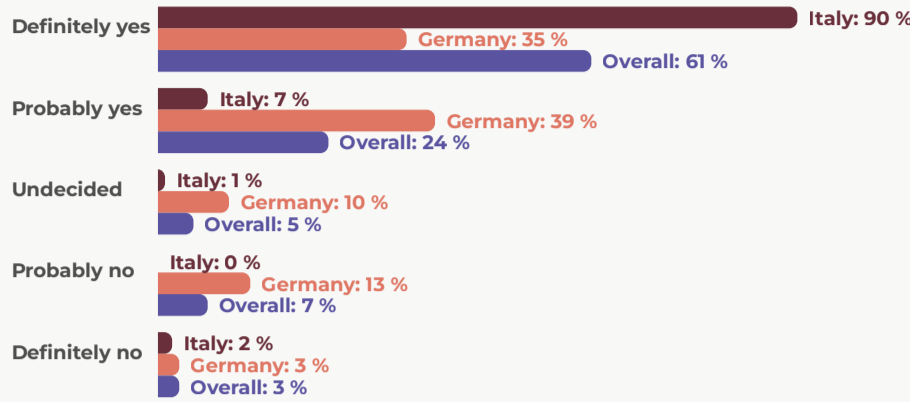
The quantitative results from the online survey complemented the qualitative results from conversations with 65 interviewees in Berlin from summer 2022. All research results are presented in the policy brief, which is available on the coalition's website here:



[job-guarantee.eu/policy-brief](https://job-guarantee.eu/policy-brief)  
(Free PDF-Download)

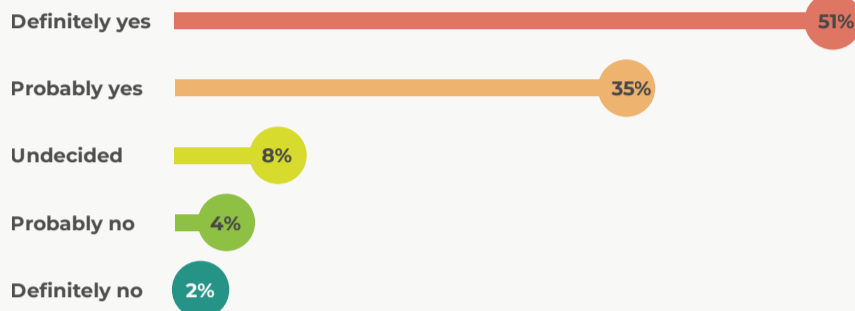
## Unemployment is perceived as an issue of general concern, however, with varying relevance across countries.

Example: 90% of the survey participants living in Italy view unemployment as a very pressing issue in general.



## Introducing a publicly-funded employment programme with guaranteed quality jobs is widely seen as reasonable.

Example: 51% of participants think that the introduction of a publicly-funded employment programme with guaranteed quality jobs would make sense.



**475** participants

...by country of residence:

Germany	145
Italy	122
Belgium	42
France	39
Spain	18
Portugal	14
Ireland	12
Poland	12
Austria	8
Netherlands	8
Hungary	5
Slovenia	5
Sweden	5
Other EU	10
Non-EU	30 (17 UK)

...by highest formal education:

PhD	13,5%
Master	42,3%
Bachelor	19,4%
High school	13,7%
Vocational education	10,3%
None	0,8%

...by gender:

Male	273 (57%)
Female	179 (38%)
Prefer not to say	11 (2%)
Non-binary	5
Trans	2
Trans and non-binary	2
Female and non-binary	1
Male and non-binary	1
Not listed	1

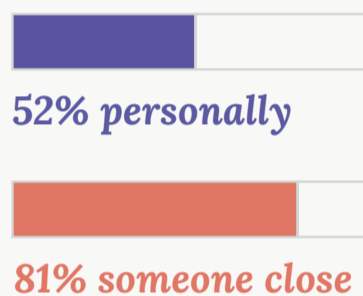
...by age group:

19-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	>85	n/a
23	120	90	81	92	48	17	1	3



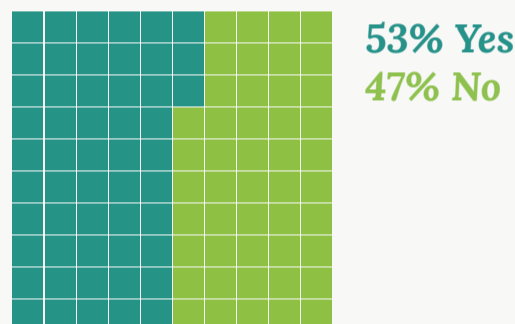
## Experiencing unemployment and the labour market: The respondents have been facing multiple burdens and problems.

### Percentage of respondents who reported having been negatively affected by unemployment:



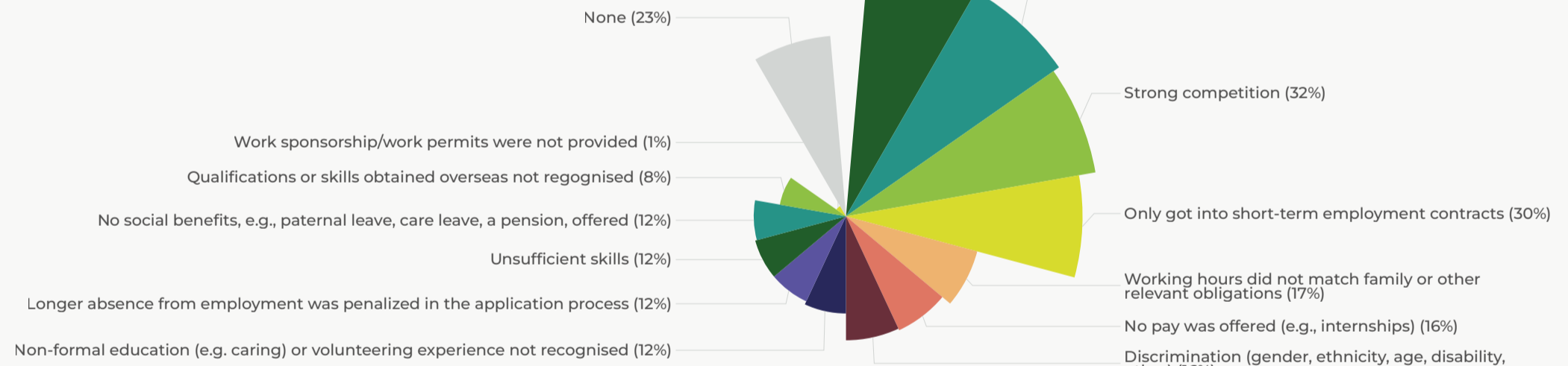
52% of respondents reported having been personally and 81% reported that someone close to them had been negatively affected by unemployment.

### Percentage of respondents who have reported health problems (psychological and/or physical) due to work:



### Which obstacles have you faced when entering (or trying to enter) the labor market?

Almost 4 out of 5 participants have experienced one or more barriers to entering the labour market. 23% have experienced none. The results need to be read in the light of the sample of respondents, who tend to be highly formally educated, and most have EU citizenship.



## If there was a publicly funded job programme which would grant everyone who is in need of employment a decently-paid job...

### ....what kind of jobs are considered more relevant?



#### Care Jobs

Strengthening programmes that attend to children, people with disabilities, families, the elderly, at-risk youths, and migrants

89%



#### Green Jobs

Environmental conservation, increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and housing, sustainable food supply

87%



#### Blue Jobs

Water conservation, preventing contamination, waters etc.

84%



**Community Jobs**  
Repairing streets and sidewalks; modernising of schools and other public community-serving facilities and areas

81%



#### Emergency Jobs

Expanding emergency preparedness, supporting relief and recovery from natural and community disasters

78%



#### Cultural Jobs

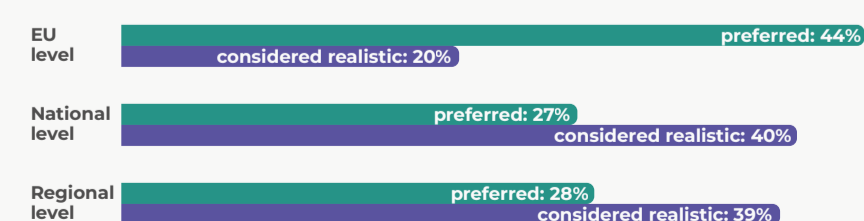
Producing, rehabilitating, maintaining works of public art, including creative, artistic, or cultural works

61%

### ...what level of implementation would be preferred? What level is perceived as realistic?

86% of the participants are fully or rather in favor of a publicly-funded job programme for zero involuntary unemployment (as presented above). The perception of the levels of implementation preferred (green bar) and perceived as realistic (purple bar) diverge.

Example: 44% of participants would prefer to see a public employment programme with guaranteed quality jobs implemented at EU level, but only 20% think this would be realistic in comparison to the national and regional levels.



## Conclusions:

The public sector is viewed as a central driver for the green transition, and public employment programmes that can counter involuntary unemployment are widely regarded as useful by respondents. Free field comments and conversations from the qualitative interviews revealed some doubt about the non-punitive character and aptness in terms of the tasks created within a potential programme.

The growing body of practical experience and research by the coalition partners has contributed and will support the development of best practices.

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