

**Labour market policy in Europe:
Activation and flexicurity facing the economic crisis**

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The economic downturn in 2007 has led to a very spectacular rise in unemployment in some countries, especially concentrated among low educated and young men. Facing this new context, the reactions of labour market policies seem ambiguous. On the one hand, institutional reforms (like reforms of public employment services) and in work incentives still follow previous reform trends, especially the activation framework. On the other hand, a large number of countries also develop internal flexibility devices (including partial unemployment), and reinforce unemployment insurance or minimum income policies. These types of policies may have contributed to temper the direct impact of the crisis on labour market trends (especially in Continental countries). They also lead to the reintroduction of some old debates (on working time sharing, on the minimum wage), especially in the New Member States. Finally, these trends put the European Employment Strategy flexicurity principles into question.