






D3.2

**Long-term
unemployment in
Tuscany: mapping
'who & why'**

Deliverable Table

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About UPFARM

UPFARM aims to strengthen social farming (SF) as a tool for inclusive and sustainable employment in Tuscany, addressing the needs of long-term unemployed individuals. Building on existing SF initiatives and networks in the region, the project develops new knowledge, methods, tools, and participatory governance models, with the goal of scaling up SF into a regional asset for job inclusion.

The strategy is implemented through four territorial living labs (Piana di Lucca, Area Pisa, Valdinievole, Zona Fiorentina Sud-Est), which will enhance the capacity of local alliances to work together for the socio-occupational inclusion of the long-term unemployed. The labs will combine capacity-building activities, co-design of services, and experimentation with new employment pathways, becoming both drivers and models of the scaling strategy.

The results and approaches developed will be disseminated at the regional level through an open call for new territories and partnerships. The project will also draw on the contributions of European partners to learn from their experiences, strengthen scaling pathways, and contribute to policy innovation at the EU level.

In addition to realizing 40 job placements for long-term unemployed people, UPFARM aims to leave a tangible and lasting legacy: tools, methods, and alliances capable of growing SF in Tuscany, spreading it to new areas, integrating it into public policies, and promoting a more inclusive and sustainable culture.

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List of Acronyms

ADI	Assegno di Inclusione (Inclusion Allowance)
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
ARTI	Agenzia Regionale Toscana per l'Impiego (Tuscany Regional Employment Agency)
Cpl	Centro per l'Impiego (Employment Centre)
DYPA	Greek Public Employment Service
ESF/ESF+	European Social Fund/European Social Fund Plus
ESS	Employment Services of Slovenia
EU	European Union
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union
GOL	Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori (Workers' Employability Guarantee)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (National Statistical Institute)
LTU	Long-term Unemployment
NASpl	Nuova Assicurazione Sociale per l'Impiego (New Social Insurance for Employment)
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PES	Public Employment Service
SIU	Sistema Informativo Unitario (Unified Information System)

SFL	Supporto Formazione Lavoro (Labour-Training Support)
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Executive Summary

To be completed for the final report

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Deliverable

Task 2 of Work Package 3 of the UPFARM project – *Unlocking the Potential of Social Farming for Inclusive, Sustainable and Regenerative Jobs against Long-Term Unemployment* – aims to analyse long-term unemployment (LTU) in Tuscany, with a specific focus on the four territories involved in the project’s experimentation. The analysis examines the determinants and profiles of long-term unemployed individuals, including their main characteristics, needs, and barriers that hinder their job placement, with the objective of informing more targeted interventions in the 4 territories. In addition, the task explores the integrated management of LTUs by social and employment services, as well as the involvement and role of businesses in supporting the labour market inclusion of LTUs.

1.2 Connection with other documents

This report presents the results of the second analytical step of WP3, which consists of three closely interconnected tasks and related deliverables. Building on the legislative, policy and programming framework outlined in D3.1, this report (D3.2) provides an in-depth analysis of long-term unemployment (LTU), examining its characteristics, determinants, needs, and barriers, in order to provide insights for personalised employment support. Finally, D3.3 will build directly on the evidence emerging from the previous tasks explore the potential of social farming as specific sector for the labour market integration of LTUs.

1.3 Structure of the Deliverable

This report is structured into six chapters.

After this **first introductory chapter**, outlining the objectives, scope, structure, and methodology of the Deliverable, **Chapter 2** presents an overview of unemployment and long-term unemployment in Tuscany within the national and European context. It explores definitions, key issues, and the main statistical indicators and data.

The following chapters respectively analyse the main characteristics of the long-term unemployed (**Chapter 3**), and determinants, barriers, needs affecting their re-employment in Tuscany, as well as the main consequences for long-term unemployed individuals (**Chapter 4**). These analyses draw both from the relevant literature and from evidence collected from interviews with operators of social and employment services in the Tuscan territories participating in the experimentation. These sections also include an overview of key findings from the partner countries (Greece, Slovenia and France), highlighting potential similarities and differences with the considered Tuscan territories.

Chapter 5 focuses on the integrated management of LTUs in the Tuscan territories, as described by the interviewed social and employment services operators. In particular, it

presents the overall process of integrated case management (including access to services, assessment, definition of personalised plans, and support during job search), the operational arrangements of multidisciplinary teams, the activation of related interventions, and the placement outcomes. On this regard, particular attention is paid to the main placement sectors and occupations, the extent and modalities of employers' involvement in supporting the socio-occupational integration of LTUs as well as the main strengths and weaknesses of the case management process. Comparative evidence from the European partner countries is also presented, with a view to identifying similarities and differences with Tuscany, especially in relation to shared working practices among social and employment services for disadvantaged groups.

Finally, **Chapter 6** analyses the main policy implications emerging from the literature and presents the main conclusions and policy recommendations for the Tuscan territories involved in the project experimentation. The recommendations specifically focus on the issue of services' integration as well as on the involvement of enterprises in labour market integration pathways. In this context, specific attention is devoted to the role of social farming and its recognised high potential for the social and labour inclusion of LTUs and other disadvantaged groups, being a sector that allows to combine employment opportunities with personalised support and positive social outcomes at local level.

The report includes **four summary fiches of the territorial case studies (Annex 1)**, which summarise the main findings from the interviews regarding the characteristics of LTUs in the four territories, as well as their needs, barriers and the case management process.

1.4 Methodology

In order to explore the determinants and profiles of LTUs, the study has been carried out through a combination of **desk research and document analysis, as well as field data collection based on online interviews and ad hoc surveys**.

More specifically, the desk analysis included:

- A review of existing studies and research at European, national and regional level on the characteristics and determinants and consequences of long-term unemployment.
- The collection and analysis of available data from different sources, including: ISTAT Labour Force Survey, SIL data (Sistema Informativo Lavoro of Regione Toscana) on individuals registered as unemployed with Public Employment Services, and data from the monitoring of the GOL Programme (Workers' Employability Guarantee Programme) and its participants. The data collection and analysis focused on Tuscany – in comparison with the national and European context – and, where possible, on the four territories involved in the project (Piana di Lucca, Pisa, Fiorentina Sud-Est and Valdinievole).

The fieldwork was based on the following activities:

- An **ad hoc questionnaire** addressed to representatives of **three foreign partner organisations** (the Employment Service of Slovenia, Réseau ASTRA – France, P2P Lab – Greece), to collect information on the dimensions and characteristics of LTUs in their country, as well as the determinants of long-term unemployment, the barriers and needs of LTUs in the job placement process. The questionnaires also examined existing policies and best practices/experiences in the provision of integrated and personalised support for the social and labour market inclusion of LTUs, particularly in social farming;
- **semi-structured interviews** with social and employment service operators in the four Tuscan territories hosting the pilot activities (Società della Salute Valdinievole, Società della Salute Fiorentina Sud-est, Società della Salute Pisana, Comune di Capannori). The interviews were aimed at better understanding the main LTU profiles and determinants in each territory, identifying support needs and assessing which LTU groups are currently reached and supported (or not), as well as the main strengths and weaknesses of existing interventions.

Drawing on the results of the desk analysis and on the qualitative evidence collected through fieldwork, **specific recommendations** were then derived for the four Tuscan territories involved in the pilot activities. Indeed, the desk analysis allowed to understand the territorial contexts, to map existing interventions and implementation modalities, and to identify the main issues related to long-term unemployment at local level. Similarly, interviews with social and employment services operators provided direct evidence on operational practices and challenges in the implementation of interventions, as well as on the emerging needs of LTU beneficiaries. The methodological approach underpinning the recommendations was further enriched by a benchmarking activity carried out through comparison with inputs and practices emerging from the exchange with the three partner countries on the topic of long-term unemployment.

2. The Tuscan labour market in the national and European context

This chapter delves into the issue of unemployment, and particularly of long-term unemployment. The first paragraph provides a definition of LTU and an overview of the main issues and themes emerging from the literature. The chapter then continues by outlining the main data on unemployment and long-term unemployment in Tuscany, also through a comparison with national and EU data. The comparison also focuses on the three UPFARM partner countries (Greece, Slovenia and France) in order to contextualise the labour market integration practices in the partner countries, which may represent valuable inputs for the development of the LTUs' socio-occupational inclusion model in the UPFARM project.

Finally, a brief overview of the labour market in the four Tuscan territories involved in the project implementation (Capannori and Piana di Lucca, Valdinievole, Fiorentina Sud-Est and Pisana) is presented, on the basis of available data.

2.1 Long-term unemployment: definition and key issues

Long-term unemployment (LTU) is defined as the condition of individuals who *“are out of work and have been actively seeking employment for at least a year”*¹.

An unemployed person is defined by Eurostat, according to the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation, as *“someone aged 15 to 74 not employed during the reference week and:*

- *currently available for work, i.e. available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the 2 weeks following the reference week;*
- *actively seeking work, i.e. had either carried out activities in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment or found a job to start within a period of at most 3 months from the end of the reference week”*².

LTU represents a critical issue in today's labour market, yet it receives limited attention in policy debates and is rarely addressed on its own. Instead, policy discussions tend to focus more broadly on unemployment as a whole or on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in general. Being unemployed for extended periods of time affects individuals in multiple ways, including exposing them to higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, debt or homelessness, while the stigma of being unemployed for long can have detrimental effects on their mental health³. Prolonged joblessness typically leads to a sharp decline in income and a significantly high risk of poverty, as the long-term unemployed are often not any more entitled to unemployment benefits⁴. Even when re-employment occurs, it is often characterized by job insecurity and low

¹ See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Long-term_unemployment

² See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Unemployment>

³ Eurostat (2025), Eurostat regional yearbook 2025 edition: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-flagship-publications/w/ks-01-25-037>

⁴ Eurofound (2024), Social protection 2.0: Unemployment and minimum income benefits, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

wages, while extended periods without work may result in demotivation and discouragement, in some cases leading to withdrawal from the labour market and inactivity.

The negative effects of long-term unemployment also extend to the family sphere, where income loss can undermine household well-being, adversely affecting both health outcomes and children's educational attainment, although empirical evidence suggests that these family-level consequences are driven more by income deprivation than by the duration of unemployment itself. As noted by Nichols et al. (2013)⁵, *"the link between longer duration of unemployment and worse consequences is more tenuous."*

Prolonged joblessness also results in an increased risk of social exclusion, with long-term unemployed individuals experiencing isolation and limited social relations.

Isolating the effects of unemployment duration is indeed challenging, as many negative outcomes associated with long-term unemployment may reflect differences in workers' characteristics or stem primarily from income loss rather than from unemployment duration itself. In particular, health, family, and child outcomes appear to be more strongly influenced by income deprivation, making it difficult to disentangle income effects from the direct consequences of long-term unemployment. The cited study by Nichols et al. also highlighted that job displacement increases employment instability, often resulting in repeated spells of unemployment that progressively lower wages and hinder the accumulation of job tenure and work experience. Over time, workers' reservation wages—the minimum pay they are willing to accept—also decline, as expectations adjust downward and financial pressures intensify. As a result, re-employment is more likely to occur in lower-paid and less secure jobs, with wage reductions further influenced by the type of job loss and prevailing macroeconomic conditions.

According to the literature, individuals who experience long-term unemployment experience substantially worse employment and earning losses compared to those who are unemployed for shorter periods. Evidence indeed shows that long-term unemployment has a significant adverse effect on individuals' subsequent earnings, primarily through the extensive margin - that is, through a reduced probability of being employed. Although long-term unemployed individuals also experience larger earnings losses when they do find work, the majority of the negative impact on earnings arises from reduced employment opportunities rather than from lower wages.

The literature indicates that long-term unemployment can be linked not only to economic losses, but also to declining mental and physical health. Based on panel data from 25 European countries over the period 2000–2018, Miyamoto and Suphaphiphat⁶ underline that *"skill mismatches and labour market matching inefficiency are associated with the incidence of LTU. When*

⁵ Nichols, A., Mitchell, J., & Lindner, S. (2013), *Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment*, Washington DC: Urban Institute.

⁶ Miyamoto H., Suphaphiphat N. (2021), *Mitigating Long-term Unemployment in Europe*, IZA Journal of Labour Policy, volume 11, art. 3, pp 1-27. DOI: 10.2478/izajolp-2021-0003.

the skills of the unemployed no longer meet labour demand, this contributes to protracted unemployment. The erosion of skills during unemployment would further worsen the situation".

In addition, the literature and empirical evidence show that the longer individuals remain unemployed, the harder it becomes to re-enter employment, thus leading to greater difficulties in returning to work, potential wage penalties, and various socio-economic problems. The European Commission notes that the likelihood of transitioning from unemployment to employment is highest in the first months of joblessness and declines substantially after the first year⁷. When job search extends beyond twelve months, getting back to work becomes more complex and individuals may become progressively more demotivated and distant from the labour market. The long-term unemployed are more likely to leave the labour force and retire or simply become "discouraged workers" as unemployment continues.

A particularly relevant aspect that is worth considering when discussing long-term unemployment is the blurred boundaries between long-term unemployment, inactivity, and other forms of weak labour-market participation. People may move from unemployment to inactivity for several reasons, including discouragement. These transitions complicate the collection and analysis of data, as not all individuals with prolonged periods of joblessness remain formally classified as unemployed⁸. Some may continue to express a desire to work but stop engaging in active job search, while others may drift in and out of unemployment and inactivity. These dynamics are more likely for people with low skills and qualifications, limited work experience, non-standard work arrangements or repeated periods of unemployment, as well as for women with children and work-balance problems. For this reason, the analysis of the long-term unemployed must take into account groups located at the margins of the labour market, including the inactive population and young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Although these groups fall outside the statistical definition of long-term unemployment, they face common labour market challenges. Moreover, discouraged inactive individuals and NEETs constitute the potential labour force, and their engagement in the labour market alongside the long-term unemployed is essential.

Finally, beyond the individual and household dimensions, long-term unemployment can have broader social repercussions, contributing to socio-economic decline and increased crime rates in communities where it is highly concentrated, thereby reinforcing territorial inequalities and cycles of disadvantage. From a broader perspective, high long-term unemployment rates may signal deeper structural issues in economies and labour markets, such as skills mismatches, low effectiveness of employment services, economic stagnation.

⁷ European Commission (2025), Employment and Social Development in Europe. Unlocking the potential of people: promoting higher employment in the EU, Annual Review 2025. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

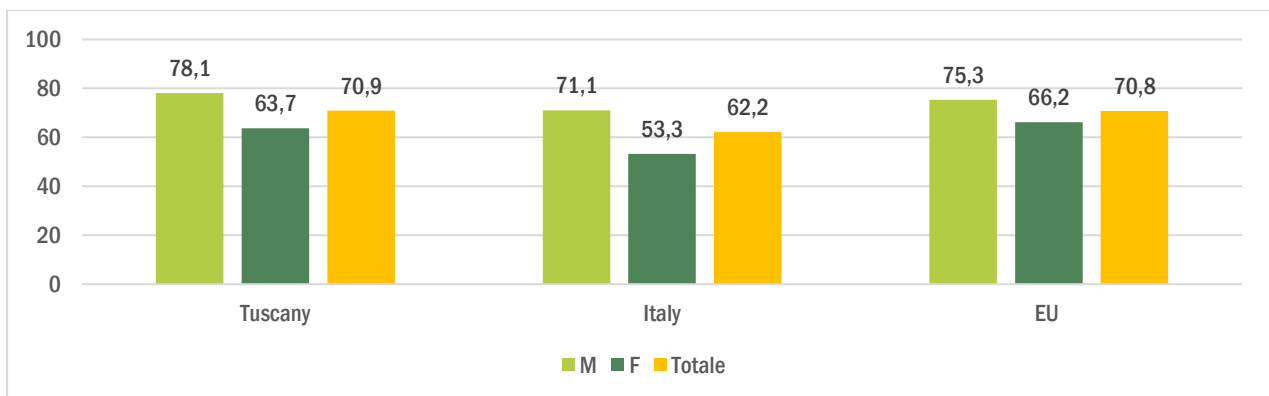
⁸ ECE (2025), Hidden potential. People outside the labour force in the context of labour and skills shortages in the EU, Synthesis Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.

2.2 Employment, unemployment and long-term unemployment

Employment and unemployment

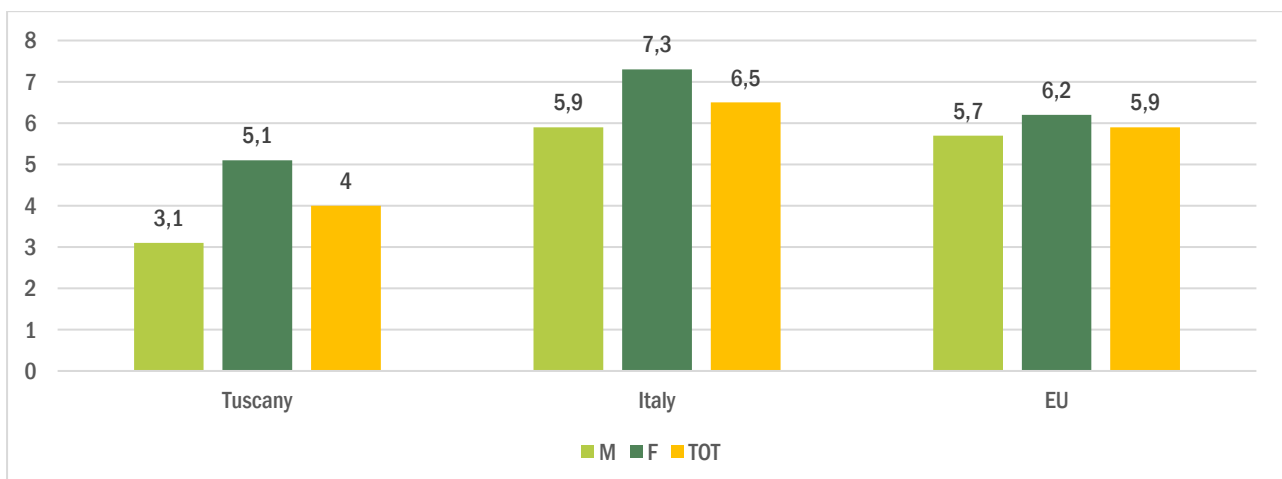
As shown in Figures 1 and 2, **Tuscany presents positive labour market conditions compared to both the national and EU averages, as well as in comparison with many other EU regions, reflecting a dynamic and inclusive labour market.** In 2024, the employment rate⁹ stood at 70.9%, a level above the Italian average (62.2%) and broadly aligned with the EU average (70.8%), while the unemployment rate¹⁰ (4%) remained below both the Italian (6.5%) and European average (5.9%). Inactivity rates¹¹ (26.1%) were also lower than the national figure (33.4%) and the EU average (27.7%).

Figure 1: Employment rates in Tuscany, Italy and EU by gender (2024)



Source: Istat, Eurostat

Figure 2: Unemployment rates in Tuscany, Italy and EU by gender (2024)



Source: Eurostat

⁹ ISTAT, Eurostat, Population aged 15-64

¹⁰ Eurostat, Population aged 15-74

¹¹ ISTAT, Eurostat, Population aged 15-64

However, gender, age and citizenship disparities persist. Women continue to show higher unemployment than men. In 2024 the unemployment rate for women was at 5.1% compared to 3.1% for men.

Differences increase significantly for foreign women, whose unemployment rate in 2023 was three times that of Italian women and almost double the unemployment rate of foreign men, as underlined in an IRPET study¹² on immigrants in Tuscany and summarized in Table 1 below. It should be noted that the rates reported below are calculated on the population aged 15-64 (and not 15-74 as above) and refer to a different reference year (2023).

Table 1: Unemployment rates in Tuscany by citizenship and gender. Population aged 15-64 (2023)

	Italian women	Italian men	Foreign women	Foreign men
Unemployment rate (2023)	5%	4%	15%	8%

Source: IRPET elaboration on ISTAT Labour Force data (Indagine Continua sulle Forze di Lavoro)

Unemployment registrations in the 4 UPFARM territories

Data available for the four territories involved in the UPFARM project, namely Capannori and Piana di Lucca, Valdinievole, Fiorentina Sud-Est and Pisana, show partially convergent patterns in unemployment registrations at Employment Centres (Cpl).

It is important to underline that, given the constraints in available information, the paragraph focuses on the number of unemployed individuals registered at Employment Centres. Unemployment registrations refer to the inflows of registrations as unemployed, rather than to the stock of unemployed persons, and therefore capture the short-term dynamics of entry and re-entry into unemployment and not the total number of unemployed individuals. In addition, these data are available at provincial level. Therefore, the following analysis is based on a selected number of Employment Centres located in the district-areas involved in the project. Notwithstanding these limitations, a few insights can still be drawn from the information available.

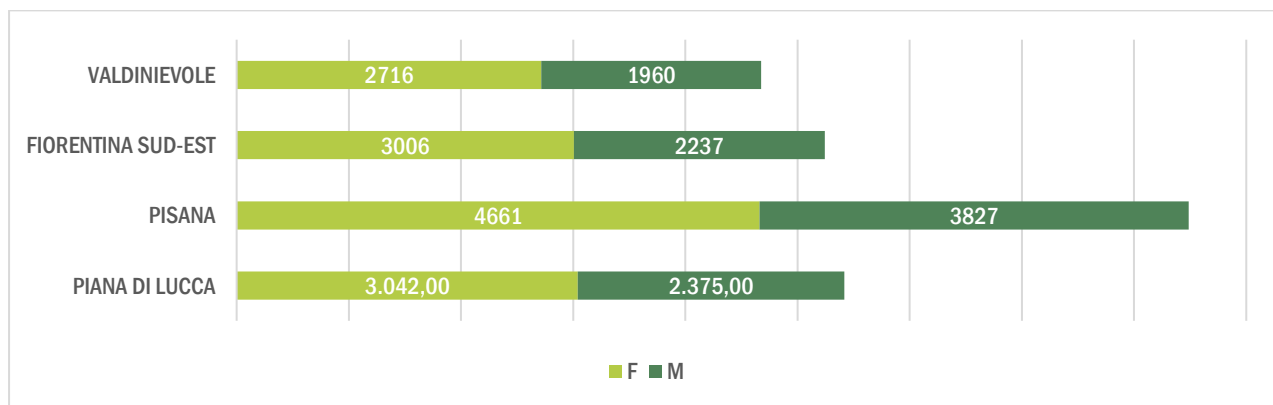
In 2024, the Pisa area recorded the highest number of registrations in absolute terms both for men and women. Fiorentina Sud-Est and Piana di Lucca had similar figures, while the Valdinievole area had a slightly lower number of registrations. Relating unemployment registrations to the resident population in each area provides an indication of the relative intensity of unemployment inflows across the four areas¹³. Fiorentina Sud-Est and Piana di

¹² IRPET, Gli immigrati in Toscana: partecipazione al mercato del lavoro, redditi, rischio di povertà e accesso ai servizi di welfare, Supplemento a Flash Lavoro n.64/2025, Trimestrale di informazione dell'Osservatorio del Mercato del Lavoro, giugno 2025.

¹³ Data on the total resident population in all the Tuscan districts are available at the following link: https://www.ars.toscana.it/banche-dati/dettaglio_indicatore-1442-popolazione-residente?par_top_geografia=090&dettaglio=ric_anno_geo_ausl&provenienza=home_consultato

Lucca show very similar patterns, with unemployment registrations amounting to about 3% of the resident population in both areas. By contrast, both the Pisa area and Valdinievole record slightly higher ratios, with unemployment registrations corresponding to approximately 4% of the resident population. In the case of the Pisa area, the higher share reflects not only its larger demographic size but also a more intense inflow into unemployment. Valdinievole, despite its smaller population, has a similar ratio, which may indicate a weaker labour market or structural economic challenges.

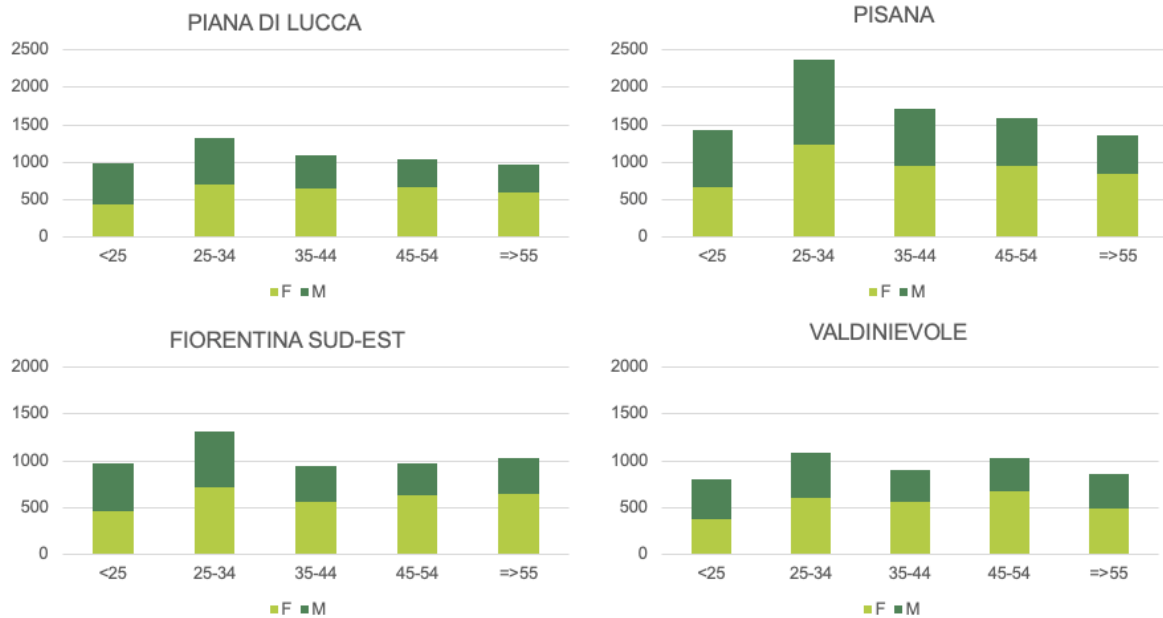
Figure 3: Unemployment registrations by gender in the four UPFARM territories (absolute values)



Source: SIL data. Starting from provincial-level data collected by the Employment Centers (Cpl), only the Cpl belonging to the district-areas under analysis were selected.

Across all territories, female registrations exceed male registrations. However, when these data are considered in relation to the male and female resident populations, no significant differences emerge, also because in all four territories the number of resident women is higher than that of resident men. Age-disaggregated data highlight a concentration of registrations in the 25–34 and 35–44 age groups, particularly in the Pisa and Fiorentina Sud-Est areas. At the same time, in all territories, although with some differences, a considerable share of registered unemployed belongs to the age group 45–54 and 55+. The highest number is recorded in the Pisa area, which, as the most populous area, shows a higher concentration (in absolute value) of both the 45–54 and the 55+ age groups.

Figure 4: Unemployment registrations by gender and age group in the four UPFARM territories (absolute value)



Source: SIL data. Starting from provincial-level data collected by the Employment Centres (Cpl), only the Cpl belonging to the district-areas under analysis were selected.

Long-term unemployment

Box 1: Definition of the main indicators used

This study adopts the Eurostat definition of LTU indicators¹⁴, which are consistent with those provided by the International Labour Organisation¹⁵.

In particular:

- The **long-term unemployment rate** is the share of persons unemployed for 12 months or more in the total number of active persons in the labour market. Active persons are those who are either employed or unemployed.
- Long-term unemployment share or incidence** is the share of the persons unemployed for 12 months or more in the total number of unemployed.

Both indicators can be further disaggregated to analyse specific demographic and socio-economic dimensions.

In the European Union, long-term unemployment rose following the financial and economic crisis at the end of the first decade of the 2000s and again during the COVID-19 pandemic, before gradually declining from 2022 onwards, though with persistent differences across and within countries.

Eurostat 2019 data indicate that before the COVID-19 pandemic LTU accounted for 3.1% of the total labour force in the EU. In Italy the LTU rate was slightly above the European average (around 4%), while Greece – one of the UPFARM partner countries – was among those countries

¹⁴ See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/lfsi_esms.htm

¹⁵ ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40stat/documents/publication/wcms_422451.pdf

with the highest LTU rates in Europe (~7-8%). The incidence of LTU on total unemployment was at 40-45% in Italy, almost 10 p.p. higher than the EU average (30-35%). The share of men and women among the LTUs did not differ significantly, although their difficulties in finding jobs were due to different factors. Indeed, LTU among men was often linked to industrial crisis or layoffs, while for women it depended more often on difficulties in balancing work and care duties.

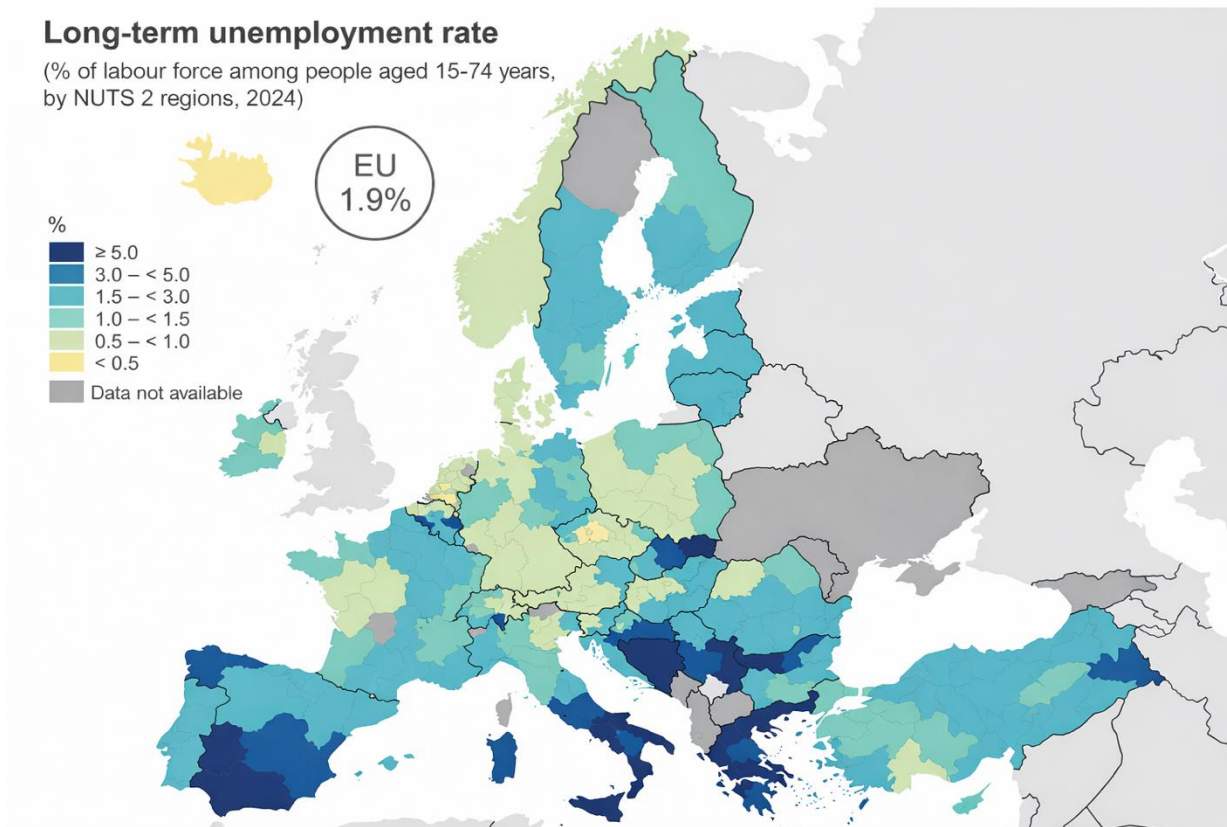
The Covid pandemic exacerbated existing vulnerabilities – e.g., women were concentrated in some of the most affected sectors such as services, tourism, care and assistance – and the pandemic restrictions increased the likelihood that prolonged periods of unemployment would turn into inactivity or discouragement, especially for women with care responsibilities.

In the last years, the LTU rate has fallen significantly – also as a result of public support measures and the gradual improvement of the labour market – and it is currently lower than both the pre-pandemic level and the 2020 post-pandemic peak. Indeed, in 2024 the LTU rate was at 1.9% at EU level, although with marked differences among countries. The gender gap in LTU rates is also relatively moderate in most EU countries, although in Italy it is above the EU average (around 1 p.p. higher for women according to 2023-2024 data).

The so-called “long-term unemployment trap”, i.e. the increased difficulties in finding a job the more a person remains unemployed, has become less common after the post-pandemic peak but it still affects women and other vulnerable categories such as low-skilled workers, older workers, people with disabilities and young people.

As concerns the duration of unemployment, the main long-term unemployment indicators reflect Tuscany’s relatively positive labour market situation. In 2024, the incidence of long-term unemployment on total unemployment was significantly lower than the national average - 31.1% compared to 50.2% in Italy - and more in line with EU data (33.3%). The long-term unemployment rate was at 1–1.15% of the labour force, below both the national (3.3%) and EU (1.9%) averages. Even in this case, however, some disparities persist, particularly when considering specific demographic groups such as young people, older workers, women and people with a migratory background (see Chapter 3 for more details on the characteristics of LTUs).

Figure 5: Long-term unemployment rates across EU regions (2024)



Source: Eurostat

Although limited attention is paid to the issue of LTU in public policy – as emerges from Deliverable 3.1 – long-term unemployed individuals are mentioned as a target group within Pathway 4 of the **GOL Programme**, which is explicitly designed for vulnerable individuals. A monitoring report¹⁶ issued by the Ministry of Employment and Social Policies in September 2025 provides some information on the state of implementation of the Programme and the beneficiaries reached across regions. The report shows that at national level beneficiaries with at least one vulnerability condition amount to 2,626,696 individuals, corresponding to 85% of total GOL beneficiaries, with different incidences across different pathways. Therefore, vulnerable groups are not only included in the Programme through Pathway 4, but they can also be beneficiaries of other pathways depending on the type and degree of vulnerability. As concerns LTUs, they account for 28.1% of all beneficiaries. The highest concentration of LTUs can be found among the beneficiaries of Pathway 3 and Pathway 4, where they represent respectively 49.6% and 57.6% of participants.

In Tuscany, approximately 84% of GOL beneficiaries have at least one element of vulnerability – a figure that aligns with the national average. LTUs represent between 20% and 25% of the total number of GOL participants in the Region, a share that is slightly below the national average.

Labour market inactivity and “discouragement effect”

¹⁶ Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali (2025), Report di monitoraggio della misura M5C1R1.1, settembre 2025.

Finally, as anticipated in the previous section on evidence from the literature, it is important to monitor the broader dynamics of labour market detachment. Particular attention should therefore be given to individuals who are available to work but are not actively seeking employment (**inactive individuals**), a group that in 2024 comprised about 11.7 million people across the EU and approximately 2.6 million people in Italy¹⁷. Within this group, discouraged workers, i.e., individuals who do not search for employment because they believe no suitable job opportunities are available for them, accounted for 10.1%¹⁸ of the inactive population aged 15–74 available to work. In Italy this share was around 5.1%¹⁹ in 2024, increasing from 4.4% in 2021. Data at regional level are not available, therefore it is not possible to understand how Tuscany positions on this issue.

In Tuscany the NEET rate among individuals aged 15–29 remains stable at 11%, in line with the EU27 average and below both pre-pandemic and national levels. In addition, the share of young discouraged workers under 30 years is the lowest of the last 15 years, amounting only to 5% of the total share of discouraged workers²⁰.

Young people also face more difficulties in entering the labour market and retaining employment. A recent Eurostat report points out that young people continue to face the highest unemployment rates across EU regions, including Tuscany²¹. In this case as well, young immigrants struggle more than their Italian counterparts. For immigrant girls the unemployment rate is double the rate of Italian girls²². In addition, young people with an immigrant background also have higher inactivity rates (on average 25% for foreign-born individuals between 15 and 34 years old against 6% for Italians of the same age in 2023)²³. An IRPET report on the Tuscan economy and labour market in a long-term perspective, also emphasises that while employment increases especially among older workers for reasons mainly related to demographic trends²⁴, for young people factors contributing to job insecurity

¹⁷ Source: Eurostat, LFS data: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_igaww_custom_18974531/default/table

¹⁸ Source: Eurostat, LFS data: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_igar_custom_18974449/default/table

¹⁹ Source: Eurostat, LFS data: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_igar_custom_18974449/default/table

²⁰ IRPET, L'occupazione giovanile in Toscana negli ultimi 15 anni, Supplemento a Flash Lavoro n.61/2024, Trimestrale di informazione dell'Osservatorio del Mercato del Lavoro, settembre 2024

²¹ Eurostat (2025), Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2025 Edition: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-flagship-publications/w/ks-01-25-037>

²² IRPET, Gli immigrati in Toscana: partecipazione al mercato del lavoro, redditi, rischio di povertà e accesso ai servizi di welfare, Supplemento a Flash Lavoro n.64/2025, Trimestrale di informazione dell'Osservatorio del Mercato del Lavoro, giugno 2025.

²³ IRPET, Gli immigrati in Toscana: partecipazione al mercato del lavoro, redditi, rischio di povertà e accesso ai servizi di welfare, Supplemento a Flash Lavoro n.64/2025, Trimestrale di informazione dell'Osservatorio del Mercato del Lavoro, giugno 2025.

²⁴ IRPET, Fattori di vulnerabilità e velocità di crescita: cosa accadrà all'economia in Toscana?, Rapporto annuale, 15 luglio 2024.

– such as fixed term contract, part-time jobs and low wages – are becoming more widespread, exposing them to a higher risk of being unemployed²⁵.

²⁵ IRPET, L'occupazione giovanile in Toscana negli ultimi 15 anni, Supplemento a Flash Lavoro n.61/2024, Trimestrale di informazione dell'Osservatorio del Mercato del Lavoro, settembre 2024

3. Main Characteristics of the long-term unemployed: Tuscany in the European and national context

This Chapter presents the main characteristics of long-term unemployed individuals – in terms of gender, age group, educational attainment and other personal characteristics – starting with evidence emerging from the literature in order to provide an initial overview of the national and European context. The framework is then enriched with information and insights on the Tuscan level and specifically on the four territories involved in the project. The Chapter also includes a section focusing on the main characteristics of LTUs in the three partner countries (Slovenia, Greece and France), presented with the aim of identifying potential similarities and differences in comparison with the Tuscan context.

3.1 Main evidence from literature and data

The literature on long-term unemployment indicates that the risk of being out of work for long periods of time varies across demographic groups and depends on a number of structural and personal factors and barriers.

Regarding the **gender** dimension, data show a highly heterogeneous territorial patterns in the gender gap of long-term unemployment (LTU) both across EU countries and across Italian regions. Overall, in Italy in 2024 the LTU rate is slightly higher for men (-1.4 p.p.). Zooming to the regional level, ISTAT 2024 data show that in several regions – particularly in the Centre and North of Italy – LTU rates tend to be higher among women, and often with significant gaps²⁶. In Tuscany the difference amounted to +2.6 p.p.. Conversely, in a number of regions – mostly in the South – the LTU rate is higher among men, with particularly large gaps observed²⁷. These data reflect gender differences in labour market participation as the regions where LTU rates are higher among women tend to be those with a stronger female participation in the labour market. Since the boundaries between long-term unemployment and inactivity are sometimes blurred, gender differences in LTU rates should be interpreted in light of broader labour market dynamics. Indeed, not only women are less likely to enter the labour market due to gender stereotypes, lack of access to affordable and quality childcare and elderly care, but once unemployed they are more likely to exit the labour market and become inactive²⁸.

A similar heterogeneous situation emerges when considering data related to other EU countries²⁹. As shown in Figure 6 below, in the majority of EU Member States – especially in Central and Northern Europe, and in Italy and Cyprus – LTU rates are higher among men than

²⁶ E.g., in Emilia-Romagna the gap amounted to +11.8 p.p., Lombardia +8.1 p.p. and in Veneto +3.7 p.p.

²⁷ E.g., in Sardinia -15.1 p.p. and in Puglia (-7.2 p.p.).

²⁸ ECE (2025), Hidden potential. People outside the labour force in the context of labour and skills shortages in the EU, Synthesis Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.

²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une_ltu_a_custom_19929074/default/table

among women. A more limited number of countries, on the other hand, presents higher rates among women.

Figure 6: Gender differences in LTU incidence across EU Member States (% of unemployment, 2024)



Source: Eurostat.

According to Eurofound³⁰, **older workers** are today the group most exposed to LTU. In 2023, in the EU the share of LTUs on total unemployment was 13.5 percentage points higher among older workers than among mid-career workers and almost three times that of young people. In the same year, Italy was one of the countries with the highest share of LTUs (more than 60%) among unemployed individuals aged 55-64. Their vulnerability is linked to several factors, including the limited availability of flexible working arrangements, especially for those with **limiting health conditions**, age-related discrimination, and a lower propensity to re-entering the labour market after job loss. These conditions also make older individuals more likely to consider potential available jobs unsustainable, increasing the risk of exiting the labour force.

While older workers face the highest risk of remaining long-term unemployed once displaced, the literature also underlines that **young people** are particularly vulnerable to entering long-term unemployment, especially when they have **low education levels or limited work experience**. In this case, early experience of long-term unemployment can generate strong scarring effects - with lasting consequences on future job quality, occupational attainment and

³⁰ Eurofound (2025), Keeping older workers in the labour force, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

lifetime earnings. It can also negatively affect young people's well-being, reducing life satisfaction, increasing the risk of social exclusion and lowering optimism about the future³¹. Eurostat data for 2024 indicate that at EU level the long-term unemployment rate (% of the labour force) among young people aged 15–29 remains relatively low (2.1%), though still slightly higher than that recorded for the overall population aged 15–74 (1.9%). In Italy, the corresponding rate is instead significantly higher, reaching 5.8%, and exceeding the national average for the total working-age population. Tuscany, by contrast, records a markedly lower rate (1.8%).

Educational attainments also play a decisive role, as most long-term unemployed hold **low to medium qualifications**. Data and studies confirm that the incidence of LTU is highest among the low skilled. Depending on the structure of the labour force and the characteristics of the local labour market, either the low-skilled or those with medium skill levels represent the largest group among the long-term unemployed³².

At EU level, in 2024, 38% of unemployed individuals with low levels of education (ISCED 0–2) were long-term unemployed, the share decreases to 31.7% among the unemployed with medium levels of education (ISCED 3–4) and to 25.5% among the unemployed with high levels of education (ISCED 5–8). In Italy too, the incidence of the LTUs declines with the education level, although their share is always much higher than the EU average, going from 57.5% for the low educated to 47.5% for the medium educated and to 37.9% among the unemployed with high levels of education.

The labour market integration of **migrants** is hindered by a set of specific challenges that expose them to a higher risk of unemployment, including long-term unemployment. Recent developments, however, point to a gradual improvement in the labour market outcomes of people with a migrant background. According to OECD data, unemployment and long-term unemployment rates among migrants have declined in almost all OECD countries, and migrants today face only a slightly higher probability of being long-term unemployed compared to the native-born population³³. However, **Italy stands out among the countries with the highest shares of long-term unemployed migrants** in the European Union. Eurostat data³⁴ indicate that in 2024, on average 45.2% of unemployed foreign nationals in Italy had been unemployed for more than 12 months, compared to an EU average of 29.6%. The incidence is higher among foreign nationals holding the citizenship of another EU country (50.6%), while it remains slightly

³¹ Eurofound (2016), Long-term unemployed youth: characteristics and policy responses, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

³² Miyamoto H., Suphaphiphat N. (2021), Mitigating long-term unemployment in Europe, IZA Journal of Labour Policies, I SSN 2193-9004, Sciendo, Warsaw, Vol. 11, Iss. 1, pp. 1-27.

³³ OECD data (2024) as reported in: Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali (2025), XV Rapporto Annuale. Gli stranieri nel mercato del lavoro in Italia, a cura del Dipartimento per le Politiche sociali, del Terzo Settore e migratorie – Direzione generale per le politiche migratorie e l'inserimento sociale e lavorativo dei migranti, luglio 2025.

³⁴ Source: Eurostat

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_upgan/default/table?lang=en&category=mi.mii.mii_emp.mii_une

lower among non-EU nationals (42.9%). These figures highlight marked differences in Italy by citizenship status (EU versus non-EU) whereas at EU level the share of long-term unemployment among foreigners remains broadly stable regardless of citizenship. Moreover, irrespective of citizenship, **long-term unemployment rates among foreign nationals in Italy are higher for men than for women, indicating that foreign women are more likely to be inactive rather than unemployed.** Indeed, in Italy the gender gap in inactivity rates reaches over 21 p.p. among EU foreign nationals and almost 30 p.p. among non-EU foreign nationals³⁵. At EU level, by contrast, long-term unemployment among migrants tends to be more pronounced among women than among men.

Persons with disabilities are persistently disadvantaged in the labour market compared with persons without disabilities and face a significantly higher risk of long-term unemployment, as well as greater difficulties in accessing employment. The employment gap is strongly associated with the type and severity of disability. In Italy, the employment gap for people with some form of disability amounts to 17.3 p.p. (compared with 16 p.p. at EU level), but it rises to 46.3 p.p. for people with severe disabilities (45.5 p.p. in the EU)³⁶. The incidence of long-term unemployment is also higher for persons with disabilities compared to the overall population. According to Eurostat data, **in Italy 56.8% of unemployed individuals with some or severe disabilities have been unemployed for at least 12 months.** The share is slightly higher among men (57.0%) than among women (56.6%).

Belonging to **ethnic minorities** constitutes an additional factor that may hinder access to the labour market and the ability to achieve and maintain stable employment, due to the combined effects of discrimination and other socio-economic disparities affecting specific groups. **In the Italian context, this is the case of Roma/Travellers populations.** Although disaggregated data on the duration of unemployment for these groups are not available, existing evidence provides useful insights into their labour market conditions and potential exposure to long-term unemployment.

According to a recent survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)³⁷, despite the progress achieved in the last 10 years, employment rates among Roma/Travellers remain substantially lower than those of the general population in almost all surveyed countries. In Italy, the share of individuals aged 20–64 reporting paid work as their main activity³⁸ stood at 60% among Roma/Travellers, compared with 66% in the general population. Age-disaggregated evidence indicates particularly pronounced difficulties for

³⁵ Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali (2025), XV Rapporto Annuale. Gli stranieri nel mercato del lavoro in Italia, a cura del Dipartimento per le Politiche sociali, del Terzo Settore e migratorie – Direzione generale per le politiche migratorie e l'inserimento sociale e lavorativo dei migranti, luglio 2025.

³⁶ Eurostat, EU-SILC data (2024):

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dlm200/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb_lab

³⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2025), Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European Countries. Perspectives from the Roma survey 2024, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025

³⁸ The definition included full-time, part-time, self-employed and occasional work carried out in the four weeks preceding the survey.

young Roma/Travellers (aged 16–24), who face significant barriers to labour market entry. Consistently, the share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) among Roma/Travellers is markedly higher than the national average, reaching 45% in Italy in 2024. Gender disparities in employment rates also remain substantial. At EU level, the gender employment gap among Roma/Travellers has widened since 2016. Italy is among the few countries that have reached the EU-level target for Roma women in paid employment (45%), but the gender employment gap for Roma/Travellers amounted to 30 p.p. in 2024.

Overall, **these findings highlight persistent structural barriers to stable labour market integration for Roma/Traveller populations.** Although specific evidence on long-term unemployment is lacking, employment gaps, high NEET rates and pronounced gender inequalities point to **an elevated risk of prolonged unemployment**, labour market detachment and social marginalisation for these groups.

Finally, the literature points to **a nuanced picture of the urban–rural divide in labour market outcomes.** According to Eurostat data analysed by Eurofound, some Member States – including Italy – record higher employment rates in rural areas than in cities and suburbs³⁹. With regard to unemployment, a similar territorial pattern emerges. According to the European Commission, in Italy unemployment rates are highest in cities and comparatively lower in suburban and rural areas⁴⁰. In the Italian case, however, this aggregate pattern masks **significant territorial inequalities**, particularly between the Northern and Southern regions of the country. Moreover, employment rates alone provide only a partial measure of **opportunity gaps between urban and rural areas, which may lead to greater difficulties in accessing the labour market, lower accessibility of services – including employment services – and potentially longer periods of unemployment.** Overall, while rural areas may display relatively favourable outcomes in terms of aggregate employment and unemployment rates, structural differences in employment composition and participation patterns, including wider gender gaps, have **important implications for income levels, job quality and economic security over an individual's lifetime.** At EU level, long-term unemployed individuals are mainly concentrated in certain more peripheral or less competitive areas, while in Italy LTUs are concentrated mainly in Southern regions⁴¹.

3.2 Who are the long-term unemployed in Tuscany and in the four UPFARM territories?

The characteristics of long-term unemployed individuals in Tuscany largely reflect the patterns identified in the existing literature and empirical evidence. According to ISTAT data for 2024, in

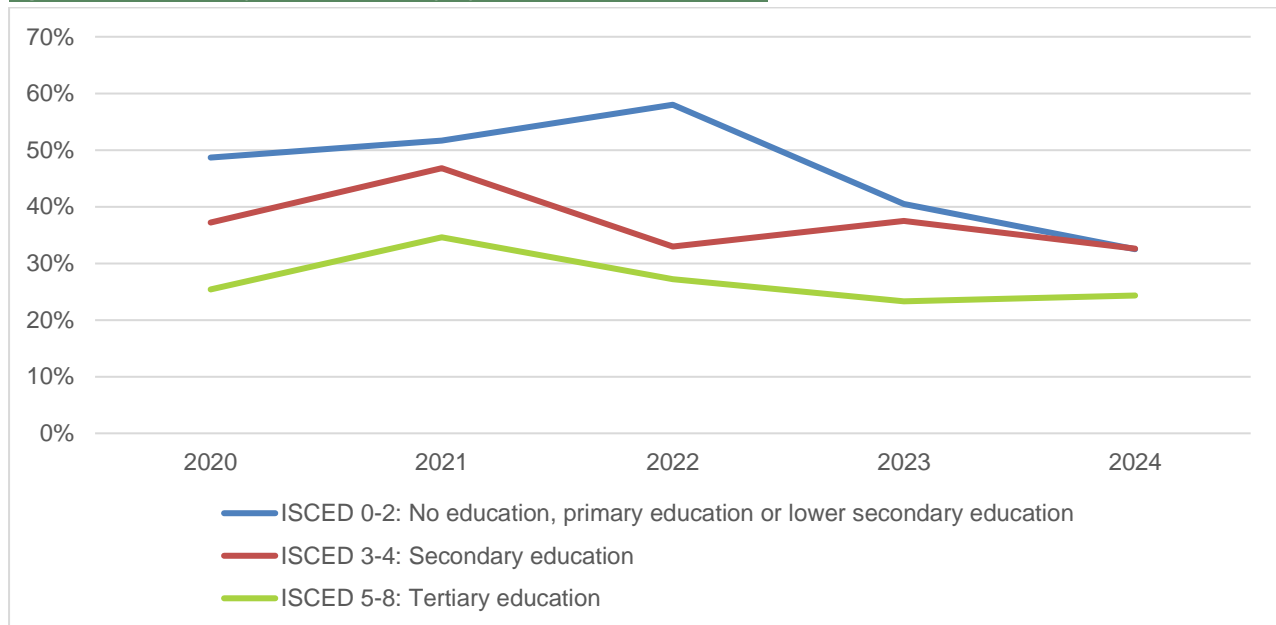
³⁹ Eurofound (2023), Bridging the rural-urban divide: addressing inequalities and empowering communities, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁴⁰ European Commission, De Dominicis, L., Kovacic, M., De Franceschi, F., Presse, B. et al. (2025), Social progress in cities and rural areas of the EU. A novel approach to measure sustainable and inclusive well-being in cities, towns and suburbs, and rural areas of the EU, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

⁴¹ Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfu2ltu_custom_19899178/default/table

Tuscany long-term unemployment affects women to a greater extent than men, with 12,859 women (32.2% of total female unemployment) compared to 8,826 men (29.6%). Educational attainments also emerge as a key factor. As shown in Figure 7, based on Eurostat data, the incidence of LTUs is higher among individuals with lower levels of education (primary or lower secondary education), although the percentage is gradually declining since the 2022 peak and is converging towards the share of LTUs with upper secondary education.

Figure 7: Incidence of LTUs in Tuscany by educational attainment



Source: Eurostat. Percentage of unemployment, 15-74 years.

Online interviews to the operators of the local social and employment services allowed to integrate the scarce quantitative data with qualitative indications. The following sections provide a detailed overview of the characteristics of LTUs in each area.

Capannori – Piana di Lucca

In the **Capannori – Piana di Lucca area**, the interviewed professionals report a heterogeneous composition of long-term unemployment, which is determined by a complex interplay of personal, socio-economic, cultural, and psychological factors.

A share of LTUs experience **very prolonged unemployment**, often extending over several years or even decades. In these cases, unemployment is **strongly linked to serious social or personal difficulties**, such as chronic illnesses, severe disabilities or other fragilities that strongly limit the individual's capacity to engage in regular employment.

Beyond this group, there is **an increasing number of individuals who become long-term unemployed as a result of a passive approach to job-seeking**, which does not seem to be associated with unemployment benefits, as it is also present among unemployed people who are not recipients of the allowance. The interviewed operators point to **a cultural and attitudinal shift that has become more evident since the COVID-19 pandemic, with**

individuals showing less proactivity in job search, lower levels of motivation, and a more cautious or selective attitude towards employment opportunities. In many cases, individuals tend to postpone active job-seeking and an increasing number of individuals display forms of “delayed adulthood”. This trend is observed not only among more vulnerable groups but also among middle-class individuals with family responsibilities, who often seek meaningful employment yet struggle to translate their aspirations into concrete and incremental steps to achieve it. This pattern may be further reinforced by the availability of informal or undeclared work opportunities, which allows for a degree of economic stability without engaging in formal employment. These dynamics are also linked to psychological factors, such as fear of failure, low self-esteem, and reduced confidence in personal and labour market capacities. While some individuals respond positively to empowerment interventions, others remain resistant due to consolidated habits, previous experiences of failure, or a perception of low personal capacities. This attitudinal shift is observed in individuals across all age groups, although age may influence the underlying drivers. Indeed, young adults often struggle to clarify their career interests, while adults tend to exhibit highly selective preferences that limit engagement with available employment opportunities, even when their skills or experience align with the requests of the labour market.

Women remain disproportionately represented among those combining unemployment with intensive caregiving roles; however, similar profiles are increasingly observed among men, particularly those living alone while caring for elderly family members. However, according to the operators interviewed these constraints are sometimes used as justifications for delaying or avoiding active engagement with the labour market. Women are also more often affected by mobility limitations, while migrant populations may face additional difficulties, e.g. limited knowledge of the Italian language or difficulties with bureaucratic procedures.

Finally, **factors such as low educational attainment, limited skills, and socio-economic disadvantage** were mentioned by the interviewed operators as specific personal characteristics that contribute to prolonged unemployment, particularly in households with a history of marginalisation. As these elements are also individual determinants of long-term unemployment and barriers to the labour market reintegration of LTUs, they will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 4, which is specifically devoted to an in-depth analysis of these aspects.

Pisa Area

In the area of Società della Salute (SdS) Pisa, social and employment service operators highlighted a diverse set of characteristics among LTUs, noting that unemployment spells frequently exceed 24 months. In particular, different profiles emerge across urban centres and smaller municipalities.

In the **main urban areas**, namely the city of Pisa, **LTUs are predominantly women with a migrant background**. Many of them have been living in Italy for several years yet still experience **significant language barriers and limited interaction with local institutions and communities**. These difficulties are often linked to family dynamics that have confined women to **caregiving roles**, therefore limiting their exposure to the labour market and to the broader society. In addition, migrant women often rely heavily on informal networks within their national communities, which can further reduce opportunities for integration. **This group includes women who have never engaged in formal employment** and who enter the labour market only later in life, typically between the ages of 35 and 40. In these cases, when they start to actively seek employment and engage with public employment services they are more likely to remain unemployed for extended periods as they face significant difficulties due to the absence of prior work experience, as well as limited skills and/or insufficient proficiency in the Italian language.

From the perspective of social services, **the profile of LTUs in the Pisa area is further shaped by strong socio-economic vulnerability**, often linked to household conditions and financial instability. Foreign women with children emerge as a key target group not only in relation to labour-market integration, but also in connection with housing insecurity. Even where one household member is employed, income from precarious or low-paid jobs (e.g. seasonal work, informal activities, etc.) is often insufficient to meet basic needs, particularly in larger families with multiple children.

In **smaller municipalities and more rural areas**, LTUs – both women and men – are generally of **Italian nationality**. According to employment services, **a significant share consists of Italian men aged over 50**, typically with prior work experience. **Their unemployment is often linked to job loss resulting from structural changes in the labour market**, such as company closures or shifts in required skills. These individuals tend to remain anchored to outdated job-search expectations and may display a more passive or assistance-oriented attitude towards employment services. They are also often reluctant to engage in reskilling or more proactive job-search strategies.

Among men, long-term unemployment is frequently associated with additional vulnerabilities, including mental health conditions (e.g. intellectual disabilities or significant relational difficulties) **or addictions**, which may lead either to permanent labour-market exclusion or to unstable trajectories characterised by repeated short-term employment. Social services further report that, while older men (50+) remain a significant group, younger men (aged 20–40 years) are also represented, particularly in cases involving mental health issues or various forms of addiction (e.g. gambling or substance abuse).

Across all groups, **operators often observe limited proactive behaviour, combined with resistance to digital tools and administrative procedures**. A common cross-cutting feature is low digital literacy, coupled with resistance to digital upskilling. However, **some gender**

differences emerge in attitudes towards labour-market activation. Men tend to display a more reluctant or passive stance following job loss, often expecting external support rather than engaging proactively in training or job-search activities. Women, by contrast, may initially show reluctance linked to low self-confidence or fear of unfamiliar contexts, but often become more engaged once they enter training or guidance pathways.

With regard to LTUs registered with public employment services, **more than half access the service due to conditionality requirements linked to the benefits they receive** (e.g. NAspl, ADI, Support for Training and Employment). In many cases, the intervention of employment services initially focuses on activation and training measures, while actual job-search activities are addressed at a later stage. This reflects the fact that many of these individuals are particularly vulnerable or distant from the labour market and are not in the conditions to immediately access employment.

3.3 Main evidence on LTU's characteristics from the partner countries: similarities and differences with Tuscany

This section focuses on the three UPFARM partner countries (Greece, Slovenia and France) integrating information emerging from the partner contributions with additional data from Eurostat.

In all the partner countries the long-term unemployed present similar characteristics.

Greece has one of the highest unemployment rates in the EU (10.1% in 2024), although an increase in employment is expected in the next few years. Eurostat data show that the incidence of LTU on total unemployment was at 53.6% in 2024 (+21.4 p.p. compared to the EU average of 32.2%). The figure has steadily declined since 2014, when Greece was hit by a severe economic crisis.

In the country, long-term unemployment shows a marked concentration among specific population groups, as highlighted in the National Strategy for Active Labour Market Policies (2022–2030)⁴². LTU disproportionately affects older workers (particularly those aged 50 and over), women (especially those with caregiving responsibilities), low-skilled individuals and persons with low educational attainment or with outdated skills. From a territorial perspective, long-term unemployment is unevenly distributed, with a higher incidence in regions characterised by weaker productive structures, limited employment opportunities and a strong dependence on seasonal or low value-added economic activities. LTU is frequently associated with an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion, especially when combined with other disadvantages such as health problems, limited access to services or prolonged periods of inactivity.

⁴² Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2022), National Strategy for Active Labour Market Policies 2022-2030, available in the original version [at this link](#).

Indeed, estimates by Cedefop based on Eurostat Labour Force Survey data for 2023 show that the highest share of the long-term unemployed among the total unemployed population is observed in the 65+ age group (77.3%), followed by individuals aged 50–64 (60.0%). However, differently from Tuscany and the other partner countries, in 2024 the share of the long-term unemployed on total unemployment remains significant across all levels of education: 55.2% among individuals with low educational attainment, 53.5% among those with medium education, and only slightly lower (53.0%) among those with higher education (Eurostat data).

In the last 5 years, **Slovenia** registered a higher economic growth than the EU average and unemployment has decreased to only 3.7%. A further improvement is expected by 2030 and employment rates will increase as a result of the growth of the ICT sector and of professional services, but also of healthcare and construction.

Long-term unemployment has significantly declined over the past decade. According to the LTU Country Fiche 2024⁴³ produced by the European Commission on data provided by the Employment Services of Slovenia, the long-term unemployment rate among individuals aged 25–64 decreased from 4.1% in 2016 to 1.1% in 2024, placing Slovenia well below the EU-27 average (1.9%) and among the better-performing Member States in terms of overall LTU prevalence. Despite these positive trends, long-term unemployment still accounts for a substantial share of total unemployment. As of November 2024, long-term unemployed individuals represented 40.4% of all registered unemployed persons, and 63.8% of LTUs were recipients of social assistance, highlighting a persistent link between long-term unemployment and social and economic vulnerability. This points to an increasing polarisation between a generally dynamic labour market and a residual group of jobseekers facing entrenched barriers to employment.

From a socio-demographic perspective, LTU in Slovenia disproportionately affects older workers, particularly those aged 50 and over, who often face a combination of obsolete skills, health-related limitations and reduced labour-market mobility. Estimates by Cedefop based on Eurostat Labour Force Survey data for 2023 indicate the incidence of long-term unemployment is highest among the unemployed aged 50-64 (49.0%), followed by those aged 25–49 (41.7%). While younger people generally experience better labour-market outcomes, low-qualified youth remain particularly vulnerable, with an unemployment rate of 24.5%, exceeding the EU average and signalling potential risks of long-term unemployment in the absence of early intervention. The share of LTU among unemployed women is higher than among men (32.4% compared to 28.8%).

With regard to educational attainment, Eurostat data for 2024 show that, unlike in Greece and Tuscany, long-term unemployment in Slovenia is more concentrated among individuals with medium levels of education (32.6%) rather than among those with low educational attainment (27.5%), while individuals with higher education account for the smallest share of LTUs (27.4%). At the same time, participation in lifelong learning among low-qualified adults has declined

⁴³ European Commission (2024), Data collection for monitoring the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market 2024. Country fiche: Slovenia.

substantially, from 40% in 2014 to 26% in 2022, limiting opportunities for upskilling and reskilling and undermining a sustainable labour-market reintegration for groups most at risk of long-term unemployment.

As in the other partner countries and Tuscany, long-term unemployment in Slovenia is further characterised by significant health and psychosocial vulnerabilities. A considerable proportion of LTUs experience chronic physical or mental health conditions, reduced work capacity, psychosocial distress, weak social networks and long-term dependency on social assistance. Finally, LTU displays a clear territorial dimension, being more prevalent in rural and eastern regions of the country, where labour demand is weaker, job opportunities, access to services and transport infrastructure are more limited.

In **France**, the labour market has faced some challenges in the last few years. According to Eurostat data, in 2024 the unemployment rate was above the EU average, at 7.4% compared to 5.9%. However, the share of LTU on total employment was at 23%, still below the EU average of 32.2%. The figure has steadily declined since 2015, when it was around 30%.

Data on LTU varies depending on the statistical source considered. According to INSEE, the National Statistical Institute, in 2024 around 23% of unemployed individuals had been unemployed for more than one year, and 9.5% for more than two years. Based on INSEE's definition – according to which individuals who have worked at least one hour during the reference week are not classified as unemployed in the following week – the number of long-term unemployed persons is estimated at approximately 500,000.

A broader picture emerges from administrative data produced by France Travail. In autumn 2024, around 2.2 million unemployed individuals registered with France Travail had been unemployed for more than one year, while approximately 800,000 individuals had been unemployed for more than three years. France Travail statistics also include individuals with reduced activity (e.g. short-term contracts or part-time employment) who are seeking full-time and stable jobs, thus capturing a wider population exposed to persistent labour market insecurity.

As in the other considered countries and Tuscany, long-term unemployment in France disproportionately affects specific population groups. It primarily concerns older workers aged 50 and over, people with low educational attainment, persons with disabilities and women, although gender differences are limited. Indeed, according to Eurostat data, the share of LTUs on total unemployment is almost identical between women (23.1%) and men (22.9%).

Cedefop estimates based on Eurostat Labour Force Survey data for 2023 indicate that the highest concentration of long-term unemployed individuals is among those aged 50–64 (45.6%), while the lowest share is observed among young people aged 15–24 (9.8%). Eurostat data for 2024 further indicate that, similarly to Tuscany and other partner countries, except Greece, long-term unemployment in France is more prevalent among individuals with low educational attainment (28.9%), while the lowest share is recorded among those with higher education (19.9%).

A strong territorial dimension is also evident. In so-called sensitive urban areas, long-term unemployment rates are around three times higher, partly reflecting the higher presence of migrants and second or third-generation individuals with a migration background. By contrast, differences in unemployment risk between rural areas, small towns (under 20,000 inhabitants) and larger agglomerations are relatively limited. Once unemployed, the probability of remaining unemployed for a long term does not appear to depend significantly on the place of residence, but rather on the socio-economic profile of local economies and populations, including levels of education, qualifications and sectoral specialisation.

4. Determinants, barriers and needs of LTUs: Tuscany in the European and national context

This Chapter presents the main determinants, barriers and needs of long-term unemployed individuals, starting with evidence emerging from the literature in order to provide an initial overview of the European and national context. The framework is then enriched with information and insights on Tuscany and specifically on the four territories involved in the project. The Chapter also includes a section focusing on the main determinants and barriers faced by LTUs in the three partner countries (Slovenia, Greece and France), presented with the aim of identifying potential similarities and differences in comparison with the Tuscan context.

4.1 Determinants, barriers and needs of long-term unemployment: main evidence from literature

In the European Union, long-term unemployment has been recognized as a specific problem for many years. Individuals who remain unemployed for extended periods face greater difficulties in finding employment. Evidence indicates that prolonged unemployment reduces individuals' chances of re-employment, a dynamic often referred to as **scarring effect**⁴⁴.

Although there is considerable research documenting the association between long-term unemployment and poor socioeconomic outcomes, it is not clear what drives this association. Those who become long-term unemployed may have pre-existing issues that contribute to their unemployment status and also to their poor future socio-economic outcomes. In this case, long-term unemployment can be associated with, but is not the underlying cause of, poor future socio-economic outcomes. This phenomenon is referred to as "**selection**" effect. Another complicating factor is distinguishing whether poor socio-economic outcomes are caused by involuntary job loss itself or by the time spent unemployed.

According to a 2016 study⁴⁵ the probability of exiting unemployment declines as unemployment duration increases. The underlying reasons for this pattern, however, remain subject to debate. One set of explanations refers to mechanisms of state-dependence. Prolonged unemployment may itself reduce the likelihood of re-employment for a range of reasons, including the depreciation of human capital during extended periods out of work, a gradual decline in job-search intensity over time, and potential employer discrimination against candidates with long unemployment spells. An alternative interpretation attributes the observed decline in job-finding rates to heterogeneity among the unemployed. As unemployment duration lengthens, the remaining pool of unemployed individuals may increasingly consist of those with personal

⁴⁴ Arulampalam W. (2001), Is Unemployment Really Scarring? Effects of Unemployment Experiences on Wages, *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 111 Issue 475: 585-606.

⁴⁵ Abraham K.G., Haltiwanger J., Sandusky K., Spletzer J.R., (2016), *The Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment: Evidence from Matched Employer-Employee Data*, Discussion Paper Series n. 10223, Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit, Bonn.

characteristics associated with weaker employment prospects. In this case, the lower exit rates would reflect a selection effect rather than a direct causal impact of the unemployment duration itself.

Other literature identifies the depreciation of human capital occurring with long term unemployment among the main explanations of the scarring effect. According to Nichols et al.⁴⁶, *“when individuals are out of work, their skills may erode through lack of use. That erosion or “depreciation of human capital” increases as time passes, meaning that the potential wages the unemployed can earn on finding a new job and even the chances of finding a new job decrease the longer they are out of work”*. Similarly, being out of work may reduce a worker’s “social capital”, namely the network of business contacts that make finding new and good jobs easier. Social capital may decrease with longer unemployment duration because social circles defined by work contact can decay when work contact ceases, or because being out of work is increasingly stigmatizing the longer a person cannot find a new job. That erosion of social capital means that the longer a worker is unemployed, the less likely he or she is to find a new job.

To better understand how long-term unemployment affects the employment probabilities, it is important to identify both the main determinants (causes) of long-term unemployment and the barriers that hinder the labour market integration of this group of unemployed individuals.

Determinants are the factors that explain why individuals enter long-term unemployment (i.e. its causes), which operate not only during the unemployment period but also beforehand. Determinants can be grouped into:

- a) **Structural factors:** economic crises, technological changes, declining labour demand, ineffective labour and social policies, living in disadvantaged areas (rural, urban peripheries, low developed areas) etc.
- b) **Individual factors:** low educational attainment, older age, lack of (digital) skills, health problems, disabilities, social marginalization and discrimination, etc.

With reference to structural determinants, on the demand side, poor employment prospects are linked to stagnant productivity and limited economic growth. Structural determinants include limited job creation in high-value-added sectors, the prevalence of low-productivity activities, and strong economic seasonality, which limit the development of employment opportunities. Skills mismatches also represent a significant determinant.

Several studies have also highlighted that a large share of the potential workforce consists of individuals who are not actively seeking employment but remain available to work. This pattern reflects a distinctive feature of the Italian labour market, characterised by high levels of

⁴⁶ Nichols, A., Mitchell, J., & Lindner, S. (2013), *Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment*, Washington DC: Urban Institute.

discouragement and a prevalent “wait-and-see” attitude, rather than active job search behaviour among the working-age population⁴⁷.

LTUs face great difficulties in re-entering the labour market, as **specific individual determinants** and **barriers** come into play both before and during the job-search and reintegration phase. In particular, LTUs often struggle to reintegrate because they experience a loss of motivation and confidence. In addition, employers may be more reluctant to hire individuals who have been out of work for an extended period of time.⁴⁸ Barriers in education and training pathways may limit educational attainment and skills development, thereby reducing their employability and increasing the risk of labour market exclusion. Moreover, access to job-related information, including information on vacancies and recruitment opportunities, represent a key barrier faced by long-term unemployed individuals during the job search phase. In addition, the lack of accessibility or affordability of transport systems can reduce individuals’ ability to commute to workplaces and thus hinder labour market reintegration. Additionally, structural and institutional barriers – as limited coordination between employment and social services, weak employer engagement, digital and administrative obstacles – may hinder the reintegration into the labour market.

For some more vulnerable categories of LTUs, such as migrants and persons with disabilities, specific barriers to labour market reintegration can be observed.

With specific reference to **migrants**, a particularly significant barrier is insufficient proficiency in the host-country language. Language acquisition is strongly influenced by educational attainment and age, with younger and more highly educated migrants generally acquiring the language more rapidly. Low educational attainment is also an issue. Almost half of migrants in the EU do not hold qualifications beyond lower secondary education, a proportion higher than among the native-born population. In addition, the partial or non-recognition of qualifications obtained abroad - due to lengthy procedures, strict formal requirements, and administrative complexity - further hinders labour market integration. In some cases, migrants are also unable to provide original diplomas or to afford the costs of diploma recognition or conversion. This can result in over qualification and skills mismatch.⁴⁹ In addition, the migrant condition can lead to high administrative burdens related to legal residence status and work permits, which may delay or restrict access to employment and contribute to fragmented labour market trajectories.

⁴⁷ Palombi M., Romano E., Zoppoli P. (2022), Un’analisi del tasso di mancata partecipazione al mercato del lavoro in Italia, Francia, Germania e Spagna: il ruolo di inattività e divari di genere, Note tematiche n. 2 – 2022, Ministero dell’Economia e delle Finanze.

⁴⁸ European Court of Auditors (2021), ESF support to tackle long-term unemployment: the need for better-targeted, tailored, and monitored measures, Special Report 25/2021.

⁴⁹ European Commission, 2025, Economic and social developments in Europe 2025, Unlocking the potential of people: promoting higher employment in the EU, Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f159d66d-91da-11f0-97c8-01aa75ed71a1>

More generally, labour market discouragement may emerge as a cumulative outcome of prolonged unemployment, repeated unemployment spells, and persistent exposure to multiple barriers. Furthermore, additional factors – such as low job quality and weak work incentives, job precariousness, low or stagnant wages, and the risk of in-work poverty – may further discourage active job search, therefore extending the unemployment duration. Limited access to social and professional networks, crucial for job search and labour market integration, may further reduce the chances of labour market inclusion.

Finally, care responsibilities and family constraints are also significant barriers to employment, particularly for women. Migrant women face greater difficulties in accessing early childhood education and care services than native women due to limited institutional knowledge, financial constraints and language barriers. They are also more likely to live in households with young children compared to native-born mothers.

With specific reference to **people with disabilities**, the European Commission identifies health-related limitations as a significant barrier to employment, particularly in the case of severe disabilities, as they may restrict the type or intensity of work that individuals can undertake⁵⁰. However, economic, environmental, social, and cultural barriers often play a more significant role than health conditions alone in increasing the risk of long-term unemployment. On the labour demand side, the main barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities include persistent stereotypes and prejudices towards persons with disabilities among employers, as well as limited awareness of the employers' legal obligations and of the available forms of support for employing persons with disabilities, such as financial incentives, subsidies, advisory services, and recruitment support. In addition, recruitment processes and workplace environments are often not adequately adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. Employers also tend to overestimate the costs associated with employing persons with disabilities, both in terms of workplace adaptations and perceived productivity losses, which negatively affects hiring decisions.

Finally, disincentives linked to social protection systems - particularly the perceived or actual risk of losing disability status and associated benefits upon entering employment - may further discourage active job search of benefit recipients.

Since long-term unemployment does not represent only an economic deprivation, but also a condition that affects multiple dimensions of individual and social well-being, the scientific literature indicates that prolonged unemployment generates **complex needs** that have to be addressed in order to support social and labour market re-integration.

⁵⁰ European Commission, 2025, Economic and social developments in Europe 2025, Unlocking the potential of people: promoting higher employment in the EU, Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union

The main difficulty, and therefore the first need to be addressed, concerns **insufficient income and material security**. The loss of a stable source of income exposes individuals to risks of poverty, economic vulnerability, and household precariousness, directly affecting quality of life and the ability to meet basic needs such as housing, food, and health. Although few economic studies specifically analyse the financial needs of the long-term unemployed, the literature on active labour market policies highlights that various forms of minimum income support should be accompanied by basic social services, hiring incentives, and training as key elements for labour market integration⁵¹.

The psychological literature emphasizes that job loss and long-term unemployment can profoundly undermine **mental well-being**. Long-term unemployed individuals show a **need for psychological and social support** in order to address phenomena such as psychophysical exhaustion and disillusionment related to the continuous and unsuccessful search for employment (as described in burnout models), as well as declining self-esteem and a loss of confidence in one's own abilities and in the opportunities offered by the labour market⁵². Given that employment is not only a source of income, but also of social status, daily structure, and community belonging, LTUs often express a **need for social reconnection**. According to the **deprivation theory**⁵³, long-term unemployed individuals develop a specific **need for social relationships** that the absence of employment does not allow them to satisfy.

Finally, another fundamental need concerns **educational and vocational support** aimed at skills updating and active labour market integration. Indeed, employability programmes and targeted training can improve re-employment prospects by addressing cognitive and skills-related barriers that often make job search more difficult after prolonged periods of unemployment⁵⁴.

4.2 Needs and barriers to re-employment of the long-term unemployed: main evidence from services' operators in the Tuscan territories

This section explores the main findings from interviews with operators in the four territories involved in the project, focusing on the needs and barriers faced by the long-term unemployed (LTUs) in the considered Tuscan territories as perceived by operators working in local social and labour services.

⁵¹ ANPAL (2019), *Disoccupazione di lunga durata: sviluppo di policy. Analisi comparata internazionale*, Collana Biblioteca ANPAL n. 11.

⁵² McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg & Kinicki (2005), *Psychological and Physical Well-Being During Unemployment: A Meta-Analytic*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 90, n. 1, pp. 53–76.

⁵³ Jahoda (1982), *Employment and Unemployment: A Social-Psychological Analysis*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

⁵⁴ Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). *Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications*. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1), 14–38.

Barriers and needs of LTUs in the Capannori – Piana di Lucca area

In the experience of the interviewed operators, **a low level of educational attainment** represents the major barrier to labour market integration, as it is often intertwined with ineffective of job-search activity and **difficulties in understanding which specific skills are required** in the sectors in which individuals aspire to work.

Moreover, LTUs often perceive their job-search activity as adequate when it is limited to the periodic consultation of job-advertisement websites. This limited engagement in active job-search strategies, which operators describe as a form of “**de-responsibilisation**,” represents a significant barrier to labour market integration, particularly for individuals with weak profiles and low employability. Another factor identified as negatively affecting job-search outcomes is the perception - particularly among LTUs with lower employability profiles - that their difficulties in finding employment are primarily due to **discrimination**. High levels of **discouragement** may lead some individuals to interpret personal characteristics, such as being a woman, a migrant, or a person with disabilities, as insurmountable barriers to employment. According to operators, these perceptions are not always supported by objective evidence and may reduce engagement in active job-search behaviours. By contrast, among individuals with stronger profiles, belonging to vulnerable groups does not appear to generate the same response, as higher levels of skills and competencies tend to support more proactive job-search strategies.

Operators report **no direct experience of stigmatising or discriminatory behaviour** by employers towards long-term unemployed individuals (LTUs). When unemployed individuals meet the required job criteria, employers generally hire them without focusing on the duration of unemployment.

However, prolonged unemployment may lead to the obsolescence of professional profiles. This can negatively affect access to an initial job interview, unless employers face urgent recruitment needs.

LTUs are often characterised **by limited attention to skills updating** and **low investment in building relationships and professional networks**, all factors that could help mitigate the risks associated with extended unemployment.

In addition, operators report that many LTUs experience significant **difficulties in planning realistic and concrete steps** towards labour market integration. They also struggle to project themselves in the long term.

According to operators, **work-life balance issues** are increasingly affecting men, besides women, due to cultural changes leading to a more equitable distribution of family duties within couples. Operators note that many unemployed individuals indicate work-life balance issues as a reason for refusing job offers that do not align with their flexibility requirements. In some cases, these requests appear disproportionate and incompatible with most types of work. Previous use of leave or career breaks before exiting the labour market also seems to increase the tendency of jobseekers to reject restrictions on their time, resulting in limitations to their

employability. Overall, **the desire to have greater control over one's time**, regardless of care duties, is becoming more common. As a result, jobs with particularly rigid hours are often refused. This trend has intensified following the lockdowns and work interruptions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the unemployed with a migrant background, a specific barrier is **limited proficiency in the Italian language**, which also hinders effective understanding of the guidance services provided by operators.

A more cross-cutting barrier, though particularly common among women, is the **lack of a driving license or access to a car** for commuting purposes (when the family owns only one vehicle, it is generally used by the man). Having access to a vehicle is sometimes essential for reaching the workplace. **Mobility difficulties** become an even more significant barrier when jobseekers live in peripheral or remote areas and may be required work shifts or night hours.

According to operators, **employment opportunities are increasingly fragmented**, and it is not easy to identify job offers from companies. The primary need of LTUs is therefore **guidance** support to identify potential job vacancies, as well as **counselling** services to define a professional profile that is attractive to the labour market. In recent years, several projects have helped improve operators' capacity to address these needs and provide better support to unemployed individuals, including LTUs and other vulnerable groups. **Training** is also crucial and can range from skills updating to a complete redefinition of their professional profile. In this period, there has been a wide range of training opportunities under the GOL programme (Garanzia Occupazione Lavoro), with courses increasingly tailored to the needs of the unemployed and the requirements of the labour market.

Some LTUs may have **complex needs** related to situations of **severe multifactorial marginalisation**. A long-term unemployed individual may experience multiple needs, including specific health needs linked to serious physical and/or mental disabilities, which interact with social and family difficulties, for example in the case of very large families.

To address such highly complex and multifactorial situations, the number of available operators with the necessary skills is often insufficient, and additional human and financial resources would be required. In such situations, effectively supporting labour market integration requires the provision of dedicated tools and services for **personalised guidance and in-person continuing support**, also following job placement. This is particularly necessary for individuals with psychiatric disabilities, where an individual tutor is necessary outside of the workplace to support integration into the work environment and assist the worker and the employer in case difficulties arise. Unfortunately, in most employment inclusion projects, it is not possible to provide these services due to lack of human and financial resources, and it cannot be expected that the company assume this responsibility.

Finally, operators emphasise that companies cannot hire long-term unemployed individuals if they are unable to generate economic value, e.g., in terms of production. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between employment in the open labour market and protected jobs (sheltered/supported employment) in social cooperative for persons with severe disabilities. It

is therefore necessary to rethink policies for the socio-occupational inclusion of individuals with severe vulnerabilities and psychosocial marginalisation, with the involvement of social cooperatives. At the same time, there remain situations where long-term unemployed individuals (for example, those with severe psychiatric conditions) cannot be placed in employment under any circumstances.

Barriers and needs of LTUs in the Pisa area

The operators interviewed considered that the primary obstacle relates to the limited effectiveness of job-search strategies.

Many LTUs rely on **outdated methods or lack job-search skills** and proactivity. This is particularly evident among older individuals with previously stable employment histories, who often struggle to adapt to current recruitment practices and digital tools. Conversely, women with a migrant background are often not aware of the different channels and tools available to jobseekers as many are approaching the labour market for the first time. Job-search activities are often delegated to family members - typically the husband in the case of migrant women - or to employment services. At the same time, **skills mismatches and limited access to training opportunities** further constrain labour-market integration. Many LTUs lack the qualifications required by employers and may be reluctant to engage in training pathways, particularly where these do not generate immediate income. A cross-cutting issue is **low digital literacy, often accompanied by resistance to digital upskilling**, which significantly limits the capacity for autonomous job search in a labour market increasingly reliant on online recruitment channels. Many LTUs therefore require support in understanding how to navigate the labour-market, learning to use digital tools and online applications and managing digital administrative procedures. Income security also emerges as a critical need. For many LTUs the priority is immediate access to income rather than participation in training pathways with delayed returns. This highlights the need for measures that combine stronger income support with activation, in order to ensure both economic sustainability and employability.

In the case of migrants, language barriers constitute an additional major constraint which significantly limit both access to employment and the ability to interact effectively with public services. Basic training activities and language proficiency courses represent an essential preliminary step for effective job-matching. Migrants are also affected by **legal and administrative constraints**, particularly in relation residence permits and employment regularisation which may hinder access to stable employment and often need support in managing administrative practices.

Health-related vulnerabilities further restrict employability. While physical disabilities appear to be relatively more manageable in terms of labour-market integration, **mental health conditions and broader psychosocial difficulties represent a substantial barrier.** Persistent stigma, combined with the limited preparedness of both services and employers to

address such needs, results in a narrow range of employment opportunities. These are often concentrated among a small number of employers, leading to repetitive and rarely sustainable placement trajectories. In this case, personalised guidance and continuous support are key. Many LTUs require close accompaniment throughout the process and, in some cases, physical accompaniment to services or workplaces. This is particularly important for individuals facing multiple vulnerabilities, such as language barriers, low autonomy or psychosocial difficulties.

Care responsibilities and work–life balance represent another important barrier. Indeed, the need to care for children or dependent elderly relatives frequently restrict availability for work, particularly in terms of working hours and flexibility. While these constraints are more prevalent among women, they are increasingly affecting men as well. In addition, **mobility limitations**, such as the lack of a driving licence or access to a private vehicle, further reduce access to employment opportunities, especially in less urbanised areas.

Finally, **operators highlight a significant mismatch between individuals' expectations and the reality of the labour market.** Many LTUs expect rapid access to employment with limited personal investment in job-search activities, whereas effective labour-market integration typically requires a gradual activation, training and sustained engagement. More broadly, the structure of the labour market itself constitutes an additional constraint, as it is increasingly characterised by volatility, uncertainty and fragmentation. These conditions make access to stable employment challenging even for individuals without specific vulnerabilities, and further reduce opportunities for LTUs, particularly those with low skills or discontinuous work histories. This points to the need to better align expectations with labour-market realities through empowerment and motivational support.

4.3 Main evidence from the partner countries on determinants and barriers: similarities and differences with Tuscany

Evidence from the partner countries aligns both with the evidence from the literature on LTU and with information collected on Italy and Tuscany. Long-term unemployment is strongly associated with low skills, skills obsolescence, health-related vulnerabilities and social disadvantages. Older workers and individuals with limited qualifications face elevated risks in all contexts, while care responsibilities disproportionately affect women. Skills mismatch and employer preferences for recent experience are common structural barriers. At the same time, some differences emerge. Greece highlights structural weaknesses of the productive model and limited institutional coordination. Slovenia underscores demographic ageing, health-related and psychosocial barriers, and the accumulation of multiple disadvantages. France places greater emphasis on socio-demographic vulnerabilities, educational disadvantage – including language and digital literacy issues – and social marginalisation factors such as homelessness or imprisonment.

In **Greece**, long-term unemployment is shaped by a combination of structural weaknesses in the productive model and individual vulnerabilities. Structural determinants include limited job creation in high-value-added sectors, the prevalence of low-productivity activities, and strong economic seasonality, all of which hinder the creation of stable and well-paid employment opportunities. Skills mismatches also represents a challenge, amplified by insufficient labour-market intelligence and forecasting mechanisms. This issue particularly affects low-skilled individuals and those with outdated or non-certified competences. Regional disparities further exacerbate inequalities, with higher LTU incidence in economically weaker and less diversified areas. At the individual level, older workers (50+), persons with low educational attainment, and those with previous long unemployment spells face significantly higher risks of remaining unemployed. Gender-related factors, especially care responsibilities, further increase women's exposure to prolonged unemployment.

Skills depreciation, limited access to targeted and high-quality reskilling opportunities, and psychological effects such as discouragement, stress and reduced self-confidence reinforce exclusion and represent some of the main barriers to re-employment. In addition, poverty and material deprivation constrain access to essential job-search resources. Institutional and structural barriers include limited coordination between employment and social services, weak employer engagement, digital and administrative obstacles (e.g. the frequent use of digital platforms in the job-seeking process), the prevalence of precarious and low-quality jobs, and insufficient follow-up support to ensure job retention.

In **Slovenia**, determinants of long-term unemployment are strongly linked to skills-related and demographic factors, combined with social and health-related disadvantages.

Skills mismatch and low qualification levels – particularly among individuals with ISCED 0–2 education – limit employability in a labour market increasingly demanding technical, vocational and digital competences. Technological change and digitalisation accelerate skills obsolescence, especially among older – who are increasing as a result of demographic trends – and low-skilled workers. Language barriers among migrants represent a significant structural obstacle. Furthermore, regional disparities - particularly in rural and eastern areas – limit access to jobs, training and support services.

Individual and social determinants include low motivation, discouragement, weak work habits, limited recent work experience, care responsibilities, cultural differences in work norms and inactivity traps, the latter especially among long-term social assistance recipients, young mothers, Roma communities and other disadvantaged groups. Health-related and psychosocial barriers are highly prevalent, including chronic conditions, mental-health problems, social isolation and long-term dependency on social assistance (63.8% of LTUs).

Similarly, barriers are less related to the absence of measures and more to the accumulation of disadvantages requiring long-term, coordinated and individualised support pathways. Institutional constraints include fragmentation of support needs, the need for stronger coordination between employment, social and health services, low participation in lifelong learning, local co-financing limitations, and legal or administrative restrictions on systematic

follow-up. Employer preferences for candidates with recent experience, limited employer readiness to provide onboarding or adaptation, sectoral mismatches, transport constraints in certain areas, and situation-specific financial or administrative burdens further complicate reintegration.

In **France**, long-term unemployment is associated with a set of socio-demographic and vulnerability factors. Single parenthood emerges as a significant risk factor, often interacting with low qualification levels and challenging educational trajectories or other vulnerabilities such as housing difficulties. Limited French-language literacy and insufficient digital skills further reduce employability. Health problems and disability-related conditions also frequently limit both access to employment and job sustainability.

Moreover, in many cases long-term unemployment is linked to broader and more persistent conditions, including long-term addictions, experiences of homelessness or previous imprisonment, which substantially hinder labour-market reintegration. Exclusion is sometimes reinforced by the reluctance of individuals – especially the most vulnerable – to seek support of social and employment services and to engage in programmes designed to promote professional inclusion. In this context, lack of information, social isolation or forms of fatalism contribute to preventing individuals from engaging with available support measures. Finally, spatial factors also play a role: geographical distance between place of residence and potential workplaces can further restrict access to employment opportunities.

5. Integrated case management of LTUs in the Tuscan territories: main evidence from services' operators

5.1 The main stages of integrated case management: procedures and practices

Access to social and employment services

In the **Capannori – Piana di Lucca** area access to social and employment services is open and free for all individuals, who can access services facilities during opening hours or by appointment. Recipients of NASpI benefits⁵⁶ subject to mandatory monitoring are required by law to register in Public Employment Services. Finally, users are referred to integrated social and employment services whenever the user situation requires an integrated case management.

The exchange of information between services and the activation of the multidisciplinary team are a well-established practice, although not yet fully formalised. In some cases, such as in the GOL Pathway 4 or in ESF+ labour-market inclusion projects activated in recent years, the involvement of an integrated team in user assessment and in the definition of an individual pathway is explicitly required by legislation or project calls.

In an initial phase, interactions between social and employment service operators (e.g., to request information about a user or to clarify their status) are systematic and occur on a regular basis. Subsequently, an integrated team is convened to discuss individual cases, focusing in particular on the evolution of the person's situation, their needs and characteristics, with the aim of defining a shared intervention plan agreed by both services and feasible for the beneficiary.

In the **SdS Pisa area**, access to social services occurs through the social secretariat (Segretariato sociale), which represents the main entry point for users. The interviewed professional operates within the "Families and Minors" Unit, rather than services specifically targeting adults in conditions of vulnerability. As such, LTUs are not directly identified as a distinct target group. Instead, when employment-related issues emerge, they are addressed as part of a wider set of socio-economic needs, without specific differentiation based on the duration of unemployment. Requests to social services are rarely framed directly in terms of employment needs. Individuals and families approach services due to urgent socio-economic difficulties, such as financial hardship, housing instability or family-related issues, often involving minors. Labour-market integration therefore represents a component of complex and multidimensional situations of vulnerability.

Following initial access to the Social Secretariat, users are referred to territorial social services and contacted to schedule an appointment. Access may also occur through referrals from other

socio-sanitary services (e.g., mental health services) or employment services. In these cases, efforts are made to streamline access and avoid duplication, allowing for more immediate activation of support.

Access to the Employment Centre occurs through multiple channels, reflecting both formal regulatory mechanisms and informal referral practices. Individuals receiving income-support benefits subject to conditionality, such as the Inclusion Allowance (ADI) or the Support for Training and Employment (SFL), are required to engage with employment services and are contacted through centrally defined procedures, typically via SMS or email notifications. The process is increasingly digitalised, placing responsibility on individuals to comply with administrative requirements through online platforms. However, many users lack adequate digital skills or tools, and therefore often request the support of service operators to complete these procedures. In addition to mandatory activation channels, access to employment services may also occur on a voluntary basis, with individuals directly approaching the service. A further access pathway is represented by referrals from social services. These referrals are generally informal and not supported by standardised procedures or shared tools. In most cases, communication between services takes place through direct contact between professionals (e.g. phone calls or emails), or through the user being advised to contact the Employment Centre.

Need assessment and profiling

In the **Capannori – Piana di Lucca** area the multidimensional assessment of needs for these target groups is carried out through an inter-professional approach, although starting from different profiling systems as each service applies its own profiling tools. However, when multidimensional issues emerge – either through profiling instruments or through more informal exchanges between users and operators – the case is shared with other services. This may involve verifying whether the person is already receiving support, comparing the outcomes of different profiling tools or requesting an assessment by another service. This inter-service exchange and comparison of profiling results constitutes a key added value of this phase, as it helps to identify issues that may not emerge through a single tool or perspective, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the individual needs.

In the **SdS Pisa area**, the need assessment process is not standardised and differs across services and sectors. **Formal multidimensional assessment mechanisms are not in place and need assessment occurs on a more flexible and case-by-case basis.** At operators' level, multidisciplinary teams are not formalised and generally not in place even at informal level. Instead, **informal coordination is built on individual cases through direct communication between professionals.** While this approach can be effective in addressing complex needs, it is time-consuming and highly dependent on individual initiative and available resources.

When unemployment is identified as a relevant issue, social services activate cooperation with public employment services. This may involve informal exchanges, email

communication and case referrals, often accompanied by the sharing of relevant information and request activation within available programmes (e.g., GOL Programme). In some cases, individuals are physically accompanied to the employment centre to facilitate initial engagement. Employment services follow more structured procedures for **beneficiaries of income-support measures** such as the Inclusion Allowance, including the signing of an activation agreement (Patto di Attivazione Digitale – PAD).

Some coordination functions are informally carried out by specific professionals (coordinators) **acting as reference points between services**, systematic follow-up and joint monitoring of complex cases remain limited. However, the absence of a formalised and regularly convened multidisciplinary team limits the effectiveness of integrated case management. **High workloads and limited resources represent an additional issue**, making it difficult to ensure systematic coordination and continuity.

Within employment services needs assessment is carried out through dedicated tools. In particular, since 2022 the main assessment instrument is the profiling tool developed under the GOL programme. This tool is based on a structured interview, supported by an algorithm that assigns scores to users' responses and classifies individuals according to their distance from the labour market. The outcome of this process determines whether the individual requires a standard service pathway or a more intensive, integrated case management approach. In practice, however, the use of the tool may be adapted by operators, who may adopt a more semi-structured approach or rely on their professional judgement to preliminarily identify complex cases.

Once an individual is identified as requiring integrated support, additional tools and procedures are activated. These, however, are not standardised and tend to vary across territories and programmes. Assessment and follow-up activities are often linked to specific projects, each with its own documentation and operational framework.

Overall, the assessment system is characterised by a lack of homogeneity across services. While employment services rely on tools such as the GOL profiling system, social services use different platforms and methodologies. As a result, there is no shared or unified assessment framework supporting joint evaluation. In the absence of formalised integrated assessment mechanisms (such as a one-stop-shop or single access point), coordination between services relies largely on informal information exchange, typically through direct communication between professionals.

Personalised support plan and interventions

In the **Capannori – Piana di Lucca** area, the definition of personalised support plans, in recent years long-term unemployed individuals accessing Employment Centres (Cpl) have mainly been involved in the GOL programme, which is characterised by a relatively structured and standardised set of interventions. As a result, planning carried out by the Employment Centres

builds on a set range of options and interventions. In the case of Pathway 4, where integration with social services is required for individuals with specific vulnerabilities, coordination with social services is activated through multidisciplinary teams.

As regards social services, targeted intervention plans are instead focussed on the household. When a member of the household requires support for labour-market integration or is engaged in active labour policies, this specific component of the intervention is entrusted to the Cpl, which then provides periodic updates to social services. The Employment Centre drafts the Service Agreement with the user, based also on its assessment and on inputs from social services, and is responsible of defining the pathway and interventions to be implemented and to follow and monitor their implementation and outcomes. The process relies on continuous communication with social services to avoid the risk of overlapping or conflicting interventions.

The interventions implemented include basic guidance, skills assessment, training, traineeships, job placement and empowerment activities. These services are delivered either directly by the Employment Centre, or by private employment agencies or, in the case specific projects, such as those funded by the ESF+, by Third Sector organisations.

In the SdS Pisa area, the definition of personalised employment pathways is primarily the responsibility of Public Employment Services. The operator assesses the individual's eligibility for available programmes, often through informal coordination with social services. Depending on the individual's profile and needs, different pathways may be activated, such as the GOL programme or other initiatives (e.g. ESF-funded projects), which differ in terms of governance, procedures, and responsible actors.

The **GOL programme** is primarily managed by PES and the activation process is led by employment service operators. While social services may contribute to the initial identification of suitable candidates, PES is responsible for completing the required documentation, formally enrolling the individual in the programme, and scheduling subsequent steps. Social services do not usually co-design these plans, although they contribute by providing relevant background information and, in some cases, by supporting activation into specific measures or addressing broader social needs. Within this framework, **social services often prioritise immediate support measures** aimed at mitigating socio-economic hardship or housing instability, such as financial assistance to cover essential expenses. At the same time, they may promote activation pathways, for instance by encouraging participation in training or orienting individuals, sometimes in collaboration with third-sector organisation and educators.

Conversely, ESF+-funded projects are coordinated by social services, and the activation process is typically initiated and managed by social workers. For some of these a more structured multidisciplinary discussion may take place prior to activation.

Coordination between services is mainly based on informal tools, such as email communication, phone contacts and project-specific documentation. There are no shared

digital platforms, standardised reporting tools or common procedures specifically designed to support integrated case management between social and employment services.

At the initial stage, individuals typically participate in guidance and profiling interviews conducted by PES operators. These activities aim to assess the individual's profile, identify needs, and define a potential pathway for labour-market integration. Following this phase, individuals are generally referred to a range of active labour market programmes and projects, which constitute the main framework for service provision. Interventions generally include:

- career guidance and counselling
- training activities
- job-search support and accompaniment
- work-based experiences, particularly through traineeships

In addition to employment-focused measures, some interventions address needs such as work-life balance (e.g. support for families with children) or access to basic skills, including Italian language courses for migrants. These activities are often integrated into broader social-inclusion programmes.

In some cases, these pathways can lead to positive employment outcomes, including transitions into regular employment.

5.2 Operational arrangements of multidisciplinary service teams

In the **Capannori - Piana di Lucca area** operates – although not formalised – a minimum multidisciplinary team (*équipe minima*), composed of operators of the social and public employment services as defined by the Regional Operational Guidelines on multidisciplinary teams (Regional Government Resolution No. 1627/2024). The team is primarily involved in the integrated case management of beneficiaries of ADI/SFL (Assegno di Inclusione/Sostegno Formazione Lavoro – Inclusion Allowance/Training and Labour Support), participants in the GOL programme (Pathway 4), and individuals facing social and labour-market issues. Therefore, the multidisciplinary team also supports long-term unemployed individuals.

In addition to the operators' multidisciplinary team, a specialised team addressing housing emergencies is in place, alongside an extended, non-formalised team (*équipe allargata*) involving other territorial actors – mostly third-sector organisations – which may be convened by the case manager according to case-specific needs. The minimum operators' team does not operate from a single location, but its activities are carried out across the territory, mainly within the premises of municipal social services and of Public Employment Centres.

The minimum operators' team holds regular in-person meetings on a biweekly basis in the municipalities of Lucca and Capannori, while meetings in the remaining areas of the Piana di Lucca are organised according to specific needs and situations. Before each meeting, a list of cases to be discussed is circulated in advance, allowing for the potential involvement of other

specialised professionals. Day-to-day coordination between social and employment services occurs primarily through telephone and e-mail communication. However, no dedicated digital platforms for data sharing are currently in use due to privacy issues, nor are there standardised tools, shared documentation, or common reporting templates supporting information exchange.

In the SdS Pisa area, multidisciplinary teams (core teams) exist even if they are not formalised between social and employment services. They are **not specifically targeted at the long-term unemployed** but rather address broader categories of vulnerable individuals. In particular, a stronger form of coordination between social and employment services is present at a **higher organisational and coordination level**, particularly in relation to specific programmes (e.g. Inclusion Allowance), where service managers and more senior professionals play a coordination role and facilitate the allocation of cases to relevant operators.

Coordination mechanisms operate primarily at a **case-by-case level through informal interactions**, often taking place via phone calls or email exchanges between professionals. As reported by the interviewed social worker, cooperation tends to occur in an ad hoc manner, depending on individual initiative.

The most structured form of integration between social and employment services is linked to the **activation of specific projects** such as ESF+-funded projects. In these cases, coordination is guided by project-specific procedures and tools, such as standardised forms and reporting templates. However, beyond these project-based frameworks, no shared tools, documentation systems, or digital platforms are currently in place to support systematic information exchange between services.

There is also an informal **extended team** involving other local stakeholders, which meets periodically on a monthly basis, regardless of whether new cases are to be discussed. The team – currently coordinated by social services – involves, in addition to social and employment services, all specialised local services (e.g. prevention services, marginalisation services, training providers, mental health services, autism services, addiction services, and prison-related services), as well as third-sector organisations.

5.3 The job placement of LTUs: main sectors, extent and modalities of employers' involvement in promoting the socio-labour integration of LTUs

In **Capannori – Piana di Lucca area**, the predominant sectors for the labour market integration of LTUs are services managed by social cooperatives, hospitality and tourism and, in case where individuals have relevant experience and skills, also manufacturing.

Social farming, which is the specific area of intervention of the Upfarm project, also represents a relevant sector for the labour market integration of LTUs, according to the interviewed

practitioners, with activities carried out mainly by social cooperatives. Employment services in the Capannori–Piana di Lucca area cooperates with Calafata, a social farming cooperative, who is involved in the Upfarm project, as well as a small number of other social farming initiatives active in the area. Employment opportunities typically concern crop cultivation (vegetables, olives and vineyards) and, in some cases, food processing activities.

Beyond social farming, the agricultural sector is quite developed in the area – particularly vineyard and wine production – and generates seasonal labour demand (e.g. during harvest periods). In this context, LTUs may be referred for short-term employment where their profiles match job requirements, i.e. adequate physical conditions and the availability of means of transport to reach rural locations. While employment in this sector is structurally influenced by seasonality and fluctuating demand, some placements evolve into more stable contractual arrangements or repeated seasonal collaborations over the years. However, due to the cyclical and heterogeneous nature of agricultural activities, systematic follow-up and tracking of employment outcomes remain challenging.

Social farming also plays a significant role in social inclusion of LTUs with mental disabilities or severe social vulnerabilities. In such cases, however, interventions more frequently take the form of inclusion-oriented traineeships or activation pathways aimed at fostering active participation, rather than standard job placements.

Scouting and matching activities aimed at identifying unemployed individuals suitable for labour market integration are carried out both by employment services – through direct interaction with local social farming cooperatives – and by specialised services or employment agencies managing specific target groups, which may directly contact cooperatives to identify suitable opportunities.

Finally, with regard to employers' engagement, the practitioners of this area highlighted that there is a need for more structured and systematic assessment of both labour demand and supply. In addition, employers tend to show greater willingness to invest in on boarding and training for highly qualified profiles, while expecting lower-skilled candidates to be immediately operational.

In the **SdS Pisa area**, employment opportunities available to LTUs are concentrated in a limited number of sectors, typically characterised by low entry requirements. Logistics, and particularly warehouse positions, represents one of the most accessible employment opportunities for individuals with limited qualifications or work experience. Another key area is large-scale retail, where typical roles include shelf-stocking and cashier positions. The hospitality and tourism sector also plays a role, particularly in coastal areas and in the city of Pisa, with seasonal demand increasing during the summer period. Finally, agriculture also offers some opportunities, mainly related to seasonal work such as fruit and vegetable harvesting. A limited number of initiatives are also reported in the field of social agriculture, although these remain relatively marginal.

In the SdS Pisa area, the involvement of employers in the labour-market integration of LTUs varies depending on the target group and policy framework. A distinction can be made between two main areas: inclusion pathways for individuals in situations of social disadvantage and the system of targeted employment for persons with disabilities (Law 68/99). For individuals experiencing socio-economic vulnerability, employer involvement is primarily mediated through publicly funded programmes (e.g. GOL, ESF+ projects or similar initiatives). These programmes rely on intermediary organisations, often Third Sector organisation, which maintain direct relationships with local employers and facilitate access to work placements, mainly in the form of traineeships. This system is generally considered functional, as it provides concrete entry points into the labour market. However, it is strongly dependent on the availability of project-based funding and operates within limited timeframes and predefined targets. As a result, access to opportunities may be constrained by administrative requirements and conditionalities, which can lead to selective processes and reduced flexibility in responding to individual needs. The current coexistence of multiple funding streams and programmes generates significant complexity, including incompatibilities between measures, which may limit the possibility of combining training and work-based experiences in a coherent pathway.

In the field of targeted employment for LTUs with disabilities, employer involvement is defined by regulatory obligations. Companies above a certain size are required to hire workers with disabilities, and Public Employment Services play a role in matching candidates with vacancies. However, the operator interviewed highlighted several critical issues. Compliance is often formal rather than substantive, with some employers fulfilling minimum legal requirements without investing in long-term inclusion. In particular, individuals with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities face greater difficulties, as employers may lack the competencies and organisational capacity to support their integration. This points to the need for stronger development of disability management practices within companies, as well as more effective support measures to accompany both employers and workers throughout the employment relationship.

In general, employers' primary objective remains productivity and economic performance, which results in a limited demand for workers with vulnerabilities unless supported by specific incentives or mediation mechanisms, with the risk of condemning these workers to prolonged periods of unemployment.

5.4 Systemic strengths and weaknesses affecting the case management of LTUs

With reference to the **strengths**, in **Capannori – Piana di Lucca area**, the implementation of the GOL programme has enabled the deployment of a very broad range of guidance, training and activation measures, also targeting LTUs, supported by the strong presence of private employment agencies in the area. In the post-COVID emergency context, this represented a

significant opportunity to expand service capacity and personalise interventions, with positive results in the Capannori area and, more generally, in Tuscany. However, as the end of the NRRP and the GOL Programme approaches, this new range of opportunities needs to be consolidated and systematised.

In this area, joint training activities involving employment counsellors, social workers, educators and other professionals are already in place and are considered highly valuable, as they contribute to building a shared professional language and a more integrated understanding of complex cases.

The main **weakness** concerns the **organisational management and coordination of the different measures and interventions available**, under different financing programmes. ARTI, the Tuscan PES, has been developing coordination mechanisms, but further refinement is needed to ensure more a targeted implementation of interventions.

At the operational level, a key criticality relates to the **high number of available instruments**, which may overlap and create risks of double funding, incompatibilities between measures, and an overall sense of confusion for the beneficiaries.

In some cases, individuals may be supported by multiple counsellors under different projects or services. **Limited interoperability between administrative databases further complicates coordination.** The services involved need to carry out careful case-by-case coordination as there is generally no automatic system to verify participation in other measures or programmes. The creation and structured implementation of multidisciplinary teams facilitates continuous coordination and mitigates these risks, but further arrangements – particularly with regards to data integration and information exchange – would strengthen case management and improve services' efficiency.

Finally, according to the interviewed practitioners, the presence of **undeclared work**, which primarily involve workers with lower skill profiles, also represents a major weakness and an obstacle to the labour market integration of LTUs. Based on their experience, the practitioners highlight that the length of time people remain unemployed is often linked to their desire not to lose unemployment benefits, which can last up to 24 months, and to the opportunity to simultaneously be engaged in undeclared work. Despite the support of employment services, this results in a low willingness among many long-term unemployed individuals to actively engage in activation measures.

Moreover, evidence from the Capannori – Piana di Lucca area shows that as the social component of beneficiaries' needs becomes more pronounced, **employment service staff face increased risks of emotional overload and burnout**, as well as heightened expectations regarding their **capacity to address multidimensional vulnerabilities**. While cooperation with social services is guaranteed through the activities of the multidisciplinary team, further clarification of roles and boundaries would help prevent overload. In addition, **operators**

would need to dedicate more time to each user, scheduling longer and more frequent meetings with the individuals supported by the service.

In the **Pisa area**, both interviewed operators agree that, in the absence of formally established integration procedures, the main strength of the entire process of taking charge of LTUs lies in the commitment and willingness of the operators. Through informal contacts and practices, they are able to compensate for the **lack of systematized procedures**. Integration among services is considered essential and, for this reason, there is a shared expectation that it should be formalized through appropriate protocols defining clear and agreed-upon modes of interaction and joint action.

In a context characterized by a **general lack of interoperability among information systems** (SIU – Unified Information System, GEPI, ANPAL, INPS) across the entire Tuscan territory, the CPI operator highlights how, at the local level, the absence of data integration — even where it is provided by regulation — represents a significant obstacle to the process of integrated service provision, not only for LTUs but for all disadvantaged groups. As a result, information exchange mainly takes place during team meetings, when these are envisaged within specific projects, or through informal interactions among operators regarding individual cases. Furthermore, information gathering entails an additional and often unquantifiable workload, such as extra meetings and consultations between operators.

A further critical issue concerns **the training of operators, which is not always adequate to address disadvantaged target groups with complex needs**. Although the role of the CPI operator is formally oriented toward labour market integration, in practice the presence of multiple and interconnected needs — extending beyond the employment sphere — requires addressing broader social issues as well. In particular, long-term unemployed individuals tend to present intertwined needs, such as those related to care responsibilities, for example towards elderly family members, making a sectoral approach ineffective. This is further compounded by the **lack of specific tools for working with these target groups and the absence of a shared professional language**, which operators are gradually developing through direct experience.

According to the social service operator, **matching labour demand and supply is to be considered a weakness**, also due to the high number of users to be managed. This leads to interventions focused on the most urgent aspects, without being able to ensure the continuity and robustness of labour market integration pathways.

In the **SdS Pisa area** operators reported that programs and **projects are currently fragmented and linked to temporary funding**. The project-based nature of interventions creates discontinuities, rigid timelines, and constraints in terms of the number of beneficiaries that can be referred. In addition, cooperation between Public Employment Services, social

services, and specialised services is currently mostly informal, often based on emails or phone contacts, rather than on structured and regular multidisciplinary teamwork.

Operators also point to **high caseloads and limited time**, which make it difficult to ensure continuous follow-up, coordination across services, and personalised support for users.

Finally, some systemic aspects affecting the case management of LTUs are examined for both analysed territories in section 5.3, which focuses on the role of companies in the job placement of LTUs.

5.5 Main evidence from the partner countries on case management of LTUs: similarities and differences with Tuscany

This chapter outlines the main shared working practices among services involved in the case management of disadvantaged groups, particularly long-term unemployed individuals, drawing on the experiences of the partner countries.

In **Greece**, working practices are organised around the **central role of DYPA (Public Employment Service)**, complemented by cooperation with social services, regional and local authorities, training providers, social partners, and non-governmental organisations. National strategic documents recognise that **coordination is in place but remains uneven and largely programme-based rather than fully institutionalised**.

Registration with **DYPA constitutes the main entry point to labour market support**, unemployment benefits, and activation measures. **DYPA generally retains case ownership for unemployed individuals, including long-term unemployed persons (LTUs)**, even when services are delivered by external actors (e.g. training providers or NGOs), and acts as the primary referral hub.

Shared working practices include **individualised counselling, basic profiling**, and the preparation of **personal action plans**, primarily delivered by DYPA employment counsellors. For LTUs, counselling focuses on reactivation, addressing skills depreciation, and supporting re-engagement with the labour market.

However, national strategies indicate that the intensity and continuity of personalised support remain constrained by staffing and organisational limitations.

Multi-professional approaches - bringing together employment counsellors, trainers, social workers, and in some cases psychologists - **are mainly implemented within targeted or ESF/ESF+-funded programmes**, particularly those addressing highly vulnerable groups. These practices are not yet a standard feature of PES provision and largely depend on programme design and implementing actors.

Coordination between employment services and social services occurs mainly through referral-based cooperation, especially for individuals facing multiple disadvantages (e.g. long-

term unemployment combined with poverty, homelessness, or health issues). The National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction highlights **limited interoperability between services and information systems**, which constrains systematic joint case management.

Shared working practices rely primarily on programme-level coordination, contractual arrangements, and digital platforms for applications and matching. Both national strategies highlight the absence of comprehensive and integrated mechanisms for monitoring labour market trends, coordinating interventions, and evaluating outcomes across services.

Finally, national policy documents acknowledge **a historically low level of systematic cooperation with the private sector and social partners**, which has negatively affected job matching and labour market integration. However, recent reforms (Law n. 4837/2021 and Law n. 4921/2022) introduce measures such as **employer advisers, dedicated units to support medium and large enterprises**, and the establishment of a Social Partners' Council as an advisory body to DYPA, pointing to the emergence of shared practices that are still evolving.

In **Slovenia**, support for long-term unemployed individuals is based on **structured cooperation between the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) and the Centres for Social Work (CSD)**. Although the system does not operate as a fully integrated model, coordination is well established⁵⁷ and primarily organised on a case-by-case and project basis, with a strong focus on individuals facing complex and multiple barriers to employment.

Cooperation mechanisms at local level include **multidisciplinary case discussions** and **formal referral procedures, as ESS counsellors may involve or transfer cases to CSD** when social, health or family-related obstacles significantly affect employability. Social activation constitutes a core component of support, particularly for persons with complex needs, and is implemented through coordinated action between ESS, CSD and external providers.

ESS also cooperates with **healthcare professionals** by providing health-related employment counselling – delivered by occupational physicians or other medical specialists – to support persons with disabilities or health limitations in identifying appropriate employment pathways or active labour-market measures.

ESS retains responsibility for profiling, employment counselling, activation decisions and monitoring of labour-market outcomes, while partner organisations (such as municipalities, NGOs, employers and social-economy organisations)⁵⁸ contribute specialised services such as social activation, psychosocial assistance, health-related counselling, skills development and supported employment.

Service delivery follows a blended model combining in-person and digital tools; however, for LTUs with complex barriers, face-to-face counselling remains the predominant approach. Employers are engaged also through a range of labour-market intelligence tools and partnership mechanisms, including job matching activities and workplace-based measures.

In **France**, the case management of LTUs, particularly those considered socially vulnerable, relies on several public services. **France Travail** is responsible for unemployment benefits, training and professional inclusion, while **Missions Locales support young people aged 16-25** in achieving social and professional autonomy. Additional specialised bodies assist individuals leaving prison in preparing and implementing pathways towards labour-market reintegration.

These **public services interact directly with socio-educational teams within social and professional inclusion organisations** and play a key role in orienting individuals towards appropriate pathways. The involvement of LTUs in different pathways is based on the profile of the LTU, the compatibility of their situation with specific inclusion activities, the availability of places within inclusion enterprises and, in some cases, direct contact between the individual and the managers of inclusion structures.

As concerns the adoption of an integrated approach to supporting long-term unemployed (LTU) individuals, inclusion structures play a central role in coordinating with public services (health, social and other support services), whereas France Travail does not directly intervene in this domain. In periods when public funding was more substantial there was greater scope to implement a multidimensional case management for LTUs, including dedicated meetings to monitor individual progress. However, the economic resources currently available do not allow the implementation of such approach. Nevertheless, even within these coordination mechanisms, Pôle emploi (and subsequently France Travail, which replaced it in 2024) was only marginally involved.

The following box presents an overview of inclusion structures for the social and labour market inclusion of the long-term unemployed in France.

Box 2: Categories of work integration structures in France

In France, labour-market inclusion for long-term unemployed persons (LTUs) and other vulnerable groups is organised through **four categories of work integration structures known as Structures d'insertion par l'activité économique (SIAE)**.

1. Inclusion Enterprises (Entreprises d'insertion – EI)⁵⁹ operate in the competitive market and recruit individuals deemed closer to labour-market requirements (e.g. possessing a driving licence or an adequate education level). They combine salaried employment with professional support.

2. Interim Inclusion Enterprises (Entreprises de travail temporaire d'insertion – IIE)⁶⁰ are temporary work agencies dedicated to professional inclusion. They offers beneficiaries temporary assignments with user companies, combined with structured social and professional support provided both during and between assignments.

3. Intermediary Associations (Associations intermédiaires – AI)⁶¹ contributes to the labour-market reintegration of individuals facing particular social and professional difficulties by enabling them to undertake occasional work assignments with other companies, public bodies, associations and private individuals. The AI is the formal employer of the recruited individual and operates by placing its

employees at the disposal of a user under a service arrangement. The AI also promotes the social and professional support of its employees, with the objective of facilitating their social inclusion and promoting the conditions for sustainable professional integration.

4. Ateliers et chantiers d'insertion – ACI⁶² provide unemployed persons facing particular social and professional difficulties with both tailored support and a structured work activity. ACIs often targets individuals considered farthest from the labour market (e.g. due to limited French-language skills, low education levels or difficulties in complying with other work requirements). ACI may operate on a temporary or permanent basis. They are State-accredited schemes that can be established and managed by a wide range of entities. Although subject to specific regulations, their activities may span across all economic sectors and the goods and services produced within ACIs may be commercialised. **Social and inclusion farms frequently fall under this category.**

Access to these structures follows an **assessment of the individual's profile**. However, since not all four types are present in every territory their local distribution plays a key role in the matching processes, as geographical proximity is considered a priority criterion. All SIAE must sign a formal agreement with the State in order to operate and receive public financial support.

All four categories target the same eligible groups, i.e.: a.) young people under 26 facing severe difficulties; b.) recipients of minimum income benefits; c.) **long-term unemployed persons**; d.) workers with certified disabilities.

However, **the first two categories of structures generally recruit individuals considered relatively closer to the labour market, while the latter two tend to support those facing more significant social and professional barriers** and requiring more intensive follow-up. An emerging trend is the development of **umbrella entities combining several SIAE categories** within a single organisational structure, allowing beneficiaries to progressively transition towards more demanding and market-oriented activities.

At the end of 2023, according to the French Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, there were 4510 active SIAE. In particular, 49% of the were ACI (approximately half of which were social farms), 26% were EI, 15% were AI and 10% were IIE.

Source: French ad-hoc questionnaire; French Ministry of Labour and Solidarity.

Finally, for **LTUs with disabilities**, coordination also involves the *Maison départementale des personnes handicapées* (MDPH), present in each county (*Département*). Through its **multidisciplinary teams**, the MDPH assesses the level of disability, supports the definition of a life project and orients individuals towards suitable arrangements. These may include *Établissements et services d'accompagnement par le travail* (ESAT), which provide sheltered and supported work environments, including social and agricultural inclusion settings, or adapted enterprises for persons whose capacities allow closer integration into the open labour market.

6. Policy implications, challenges and development perspectives for the Tuscany territories

The analysis carried out aimed to improve understanding of the scale, factors (economic, social, institutional, and structural), and dynamics influencing long-term unemployment, with the objective of informing and guiding subsequent project activities. In particular, it sought to provide adequate knowledge to ensure that UPFARM interventions and the design activities related to the intervention model and tools (scouting, profiling, and matching tools) to be developed during the subsequent living labs are tailored to the specific needs of LTUs and of the social and employment services.

In this regard, this concluding section firstly presents a general overview of the policy implications for long-term employment, based on an analysis of the main literature on the topic. In this context drawing on evidence that emerged from interviews with practitioners, several key areas of focus and development perspectives for the four Tuscan territories involved in the project are outlined, with particular reference to the barriers and the needs of long-term unemployed individuals (LTUs) and the territorial systems supporting their integration pathways.

6.1 Policy implications

Firstly, it is important to highlight that many **policies aimed at increasing labour force participation can also support unemployed individuals in finding employment**. In general, measures that enhance employability are also relevant for those who are seeking work. In particular, the long-term unemployed share many similar needs with individuals who are outside the labour force⁶³.

The 2016 Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed in the labour market⁶⁴ recommends, among others, in-depth **individual assessments and guidance, further education and training, support for housing, transport, child and care services or rehabilitation, as well as partnerships with employers and social partners** to facilitate the professional reintegration of long-term unemployed, all of which can also support the employability of those currently outside the labour force.

Other studies⁶⁵ highlight that training and start-up incentives are negatively associated with the incidence of LTU. These are consistent with the literature on the effects of active labour market policies (ALMPs) on employment, which shows that training and private sector employment programs are generally more effective in alleviating unemployment in the medium-to-long term, while direct job creation is less effective. These results imply that a high incidence of LTU could be alleviated by ensuring adequate spending on effective ALMPs, addressing skill mismatches, and enhancing labour market matching efficiency.

More specifically, with particular regard to the **determinants** of long-term unemployment, several key policy implications emerge.

First, **prevention measures** are crucial, particularly through the strengthening of education, vocational training, and reskilling programs, which equip individuals with the skills required to adapt to changing labour market demands and reduce the risk of prolonged joblessness.

Second, **reinforcing an integrated system of social and employment services** is crucial. Such a system should not only support job search and placement but also provide assistance with housing, transport, child and elderly care, and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, addressing structural and social barriers to employment.

Early **identification of individuals at high risk of long-term unemployment** is also vital. Developing a profiling system allows targeted interventions to prevent unemployment from becoming protracted.

Finally, addressing structural barriers requires **strong employer engagement and multi-actor partnerships**. Developing stable collaborations among employers, social partners, third-sector organisations, employment and social services, and relevant public authorities is crucial to ensure coordinated delivery of active labour market policies, social support services and specialised assistance tailored to individual needs. Such partnerships enhance the effectiveness of interventions by aligning labour market needs with social inclusion objectives and by providing comprehensive support to individuals facing multiple and overlapping barriers to employment, thereby improving both re-employment prospects and job quality.

Overcoming the barriers that prevent long-term unemployed individuals from re-entering the labour market requires **personalised and integrated policy responses**. Central to this approach is the strengthening of **outreach, job guidance and placement measures**, including enhanced public employment services, tailored **career counselling, targeted training and reskilling** opportunities. At the same time, **psychological and motivational barriers**, including discouragement, loss of self-confidence, and detachment from the labour market, must be addressed through **personalised counselling, mentoring, and continuous follow-up**. Tailored support can help sustain job-search efforts and prevent prolonged unemployment and inactivity.

A key priority is also **the removal of practical and social obstacles to employment**, such as **limited access to affordable housing, inadequate transport connections, insufficient childcare and care services, or health- and disability-related constraints**. Strengthening the coordination between employment services and social support systems is therefore essential to ensure that individuals can effectively engage in job search and activation measures.

In addition, institutional and procedural barriers, such as fragmented services, delayed interventions, or insufficient targeting, can be mitigated through **integrated service delivery and early profiling mechanisms**. By identifying individuals facing multiple barriers at an early stage, public services can deliver timely and coordinated interventions, reducing the risk that

temporary unemployment turns into long-term exclusion from the labour market. Such integrated support is essential to address skill gaps, restore employability, and help individuals navigate complex pathways back into employment.

Finally, policies should promote **stronger engagement with employers** in order to encourage **inclusive hiring practices, supported employment pathways**, and on-the-job training opportunities, while also preventing reluctance to hire long-term unemployed individuals due to stigma or perceived skill obsolescence. **Demand-side barriers** should also be tackled through the use of **hiring incentives** for companies. These measures can help offset perceived risks associated with hiring long-term unemployed workers, encourage employers to invest in training, and facilitate more inclusive recruitment practices.

6.2 Key areas of focus and development perspectives

Building on the policy implications emerging from the literature and the key findings on long-term employment in Tuscany identified during the analysis, this section outlines **key areas of focus and opportunities for improvement and development** for the Tuscan territories and social and Employment services involved in the project.

Firstly, in line with regional guidelines (Regional Resolution No. 544 of 15/05/2023), which define the integrated case management between social services and Public Employment Services (PES) for vulnerable individuals, **coordination and service integration between social and labour services should be formalised and strengthened through specific protocols across all Tuscan territories**, in order to overcome the fragmentation of interventions and to establish multidisciplinary teams delivering personalised social and labour activation pathways.

Long-term unemployed individuals may benefit from specific programmes, such as GOL Pathway 4 and ESF+ funded projects. In these cases, the involvement of integrated teams is formally required, and the assessment process is inter-professional, drawing on different profiling systems used by each service. At the operational level, this entails a key critical issue related to the high number of available instruments, which may overlap and generate risks of double funding, incompatibilities between measures, and an overall sense of confusion among beneficiaries. In addition, the project-based nature of interventions creates discontinuities, rigid timelines, and constraints in terms of the number of beneficiaries that can be referred.

In this context, a key area for improvement relates to the **need to reinforce system-level coordination, thereby ensuring greater continuity and integration among existing measures**, as well as **to systematise and stabilise project or programme-based interventions**. Establishing a more structured and stable framework, rather than relying on fragmented initiatives, would facilitate more effective referrals and enhance coherence across measures.

Moreover, **specific arrangements regarding data integration and information exchange**, as well as **increased staffing levels and more time for practitioners**, would strengthen case management and improve service efficiency, ensuring continuous follow-up, coordination across services, and personalised support for users.

With regard to the **case management process**, it is necessary, already in the pre-selection phase, to move beyond traditional matching approaches, particularly for complex cases. Given the heterogeneity of long-term unemployment – ranging from 12 months to several years or even a decade – **profiling, selection, and placement tools must be better aligned with both the duration of unemployment and the type of disadvantages. A more diverse set of instruments and measures, combined with targeted incentives and shared investment in training, would enable more effective labour market integration pathways.**

In addition, based on the experience of practitioners interviewed (Pisa area), there is a **need to establish a new hybrid professional role, supported by a dedicated training pathway, specifically focused on working with long-term unemployed and disadvantaged workers.** This role would act as a bridge between social and employment services, operating in an integrated manner across both services.

With regard to **employers' engagement**, given that their primary objective remains productivity and economic performance, there is generally limited demand for workers with vulnerabilities unless supported by specific incentives or mediation mechanisms. Currently, employers tend to show greater willingness to invest in training for highly qualified profiles, while expecting lower-skilled candidates to be immediately operational. In this context, the employment service has identified **a need for tools enabling companies to recruit long-term unemployed individuals who have adequate transversal and socio-relational competences but require technical upskilling or sector-specific training** due to prolonged detachment from the labour market or transitions between sectors. Companies need to be encouraged to recognise the long-term potential of individuals who may not be immediately productive due to extended exclusion from the labour market but who can become full professionals with appropriate support and training. **Awareness-raising among employers is therefore essential** on this issue, and particularly in relation to mental health and social disadvantage, in order **to combat stigma**. In this context, it is important **to develop policy frameworks that encourage not only compliance with legal obligations but also more proactive and sustainable recruitment practices of inclusion**. Equally important is supporting **the development of disability management practices** within companies, as well as providing more effective support measures to accompany both employers and workers throughout the employment relationship. Additionally, it is essential **to foster the development of intermediary actors** (e.g., social cooperatives or specialised agencies) that can bridge the gap between vulnerable jobseekers and labour demand.

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Annex 1 – Summary fiches of the territorial case studies

CAPANNORI AND PIANA DI LUCCA AREA

Characteristics of LTUs, main barriers to re-employment and needs

In the Capannori – Piana di Lucca area, long-term unemployment (LTU) presents a highly heterogeneous profile, shaped by a combination of personal, socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors. A segment of LTUs is characterised by very long unemployment spells - often lasting several years or decades - frequently associated with severe health conditions, disabilities or complex social vulnerabilities that significantly limit employability.

Alongside this group, operators report a growing number of individuals whose prolonged unemployment is linked to low job-search intensity, reduced motivation and increasingly selective attitudes towards employment. This trend, observed across different age groups and social backgrounds and intensified after the COVID-19 pandemic, includes both younger individuals struggling to define career paths and adults with family responsibilities. Psychological factors – such as low self-confidence, fear of failure and discouragement – further contribute to weak labour-market engagement.

Women remain overrepresented among LTUs combining unemployment with caregiving responsibilities, although similar patterns are increasingly observed among men, particularly those caring for dependent relatives. Additional barriers include low educational attainment, limited or outdated skills, weak job-search strategies, and difficulties in planning realistic pathways to employment. Migrants may face language and administrative barriers, while limited mobility – often due to lack of a driving licence or access to a car – further constrains access to job opportunities, especially in rural or peripheral areas.

A cross-cutting issue concerns the limited proactivity in job search, often reduced to passive consultation of online vacancies, alongside a tendency – particularly among more vulnerable individuals – to attribute unemployment to external factors such as discrimination. At the same time, prolonged inactivity contributes to skills obsolescence, weak professional networks and reduced employability.

Key needs identified by operators include tailored guidance to identify job opportunities as well as access to training. For individuals with complex and multiple needs, more intensive, personalised and continuous support is required, including post-placement follow-up. However, human and financial resources constraints limit the provision of such services. In the most severe cases, particularly involving psychiatric conditions or extreme marginalisation, labour-market integration may not be feasible, highlighting the need to distinguish between open labour market pathways and protected or supported employment.

The integrated case management process of LTUs

Access to employment and social services in the area is open and free. Certain categories, such as recipients of unemployment benefits (NASpI), are required by law to register with public employment services, while individuals with complex needs are referred to integrated support pathways.

Cooperation between employment services (CpI) and social services is well established, although not fully formalised. Information exchange and coordination are systematic, starting from an initial phase of regular interaction between operators, followed by the activation of a multidisciplinary team to jointly assess cases and define shared intervention plans. In specific programmes – such as GOL Pathway 4 and ESF+ funded projects – the involvement of integrated teams is formally required. The assessment process is inter-professional and based on different profiling systems used by each service. When complex or multidimensional needs emerge, cases are shared across services to compare assessments and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the individual. This exchange represents a key added value, enabling the identification of issues that may not emerge through a single approach. Personalised pathways are defined through coordinated action: Employment Centres are responsible for drafting

the Service Agreement, selecting and implementing labour-market measures, and monitoring outcomes, while social services contribute to the broader assessment – often at household level – and provide complementary support. Continuous communication between services ensures coherence and avoids overlaps. Interventions include guidance, skills assessment, training, traineeships, job placement and empowerment activities, delivered by Employment Centres, private employment agencies and third-sector organisations.

At local level, integrated case management is supported by a minimum multidisciplinary team (*équipe minima*), composed of social and employment service operators. Although not formally institutionalised, this team plays a central role in managing beneficiaries of programmes such as ADI/SFL and GOL (Pathway 4), as well as individuals facing combined social and labour-market challenges. The team operates in a decentralised manner across the territory and meets regularly - on a biweekly basis in Lucca and Capannori, and as required in other areas. Additional arrangements include a specialised team for housing emergencies and an extended, case-based network involving other services and third-sector actors. Coordination relies largely on direct communication (telephone and email), as no shared digital platforms or standardised tools are currently in place for data exchange.

The main sectors for LTU integration in the area include social cooperative services, hospitality, tourism and manufacturing. Social farming represents a relevant pathway for labour-market integration. Activities are mainly carried out by social cooperatives, including those involved in the Upfarm project, and typically involve crop cultivation (e.g. vegetables, olives, vineyards) and small-scale food processing. Opportunities are limited due to the small number of actors in the sector, but they provide valuable inclusive work environments. More broadly, the agricultural sector – particularly wine production – offers seasonal employment opportunities (e.g. during harvest periods). LTUs may access these opportunities when they meet basic requirements. While employment is often temporary and subject to seasonal fluctuations, some trajectories evolve into repeated seasonal work or more stable arrangements. However, the variability of the sector makes systematic follow-up of outcomes difficult to carry out. Social farming also plays an important role in the social inclusion of individuals with severe vulnerabilities, including mental disabilities. In these cases, interventions are more often oriented towards activation and participation (e.g. traineeships) rather than standard employment. Scouting and matching activities are carried out both by Employment Centres through direct engagement with local cooperatives and by specialised services or employment agencies, which may independently identify opportunities for the individuals they support.

PISA AREA

Characteristics of LTUs, main barriers to re-employment and needs

In the SdS Pisa area, LTUs display heterogeneous profiles, with unemployment often exceeding 24 months. In urban areas such as Pisa, LTUs are predominantly women with a migrant background, frequently characterised by limited language proficiency, weak integration, and little or no prior work experience. Their labour-market participation is often constrained by caregiving responsibilities and socio-economic vulnerability, including financial instability and risks of housing insecurity. In smaller municipalities, LTUs are more often Italian, with a significant presence of men over 50 who have lost their jobs due to structural labour-market changes and face difficulties adapting to the labour market and new job-search practices. Younger men also emerge, particularly in connection with mental health issues or addictions.

Across groups, low proactivity, limited job-search skills, and resistance to digital tools represent key barriers. Many LTUs rely on outdated strategies or lack awareness of available job-search channels, while skills mismatches and reluctance to engage in training – especially when not immediately remunerated – further hinder employability. Low digital literacy is a cross-cutting constraint, increasing dependence on services or informal support networks.

Additional barriers affect specific groups. Migrants face language and administrative constraints, while individuals with mental health conditions encounter stigma and limited employment opportunities, often resulting in unstable trajectories. Care responsibilities and mobility limitations further restrict access to work.

More than half of LTUs engage with employment services due to benefit conditionality and often require initial activation and training before being able to effectively search for work. A key underlying issue is the mismatch between users' expectations – often oriented towards immediate employment – and the conditions of the labour

market, which require gradual activation and sustained engagement in a context increasingly characterised by instability and fragmentation.

The integrated case management process of LTUs

In the SdS Pisa area, multidisciplinary teams (core teams) involving social and employment services exist even if they are not formalised. They are not specifically targeted at the long-term unemployed but rather address broader categories of vulnerable individuals. In particular, a stronger but informal form of coordination between social and employment services is present at a higher organisational and coordination level, particularly in relation to specific programmes (e.g. Inclusion Allowance), where service managers and more senior professionals play a coordination role and facilitate the allocation of cases to relevant operators. Coordination mechanisms therefore operate primarily at a case-by-case level through informal interactions, often taking place via phone calls or email exchanges between professionals. There is also an informal extended team involving other local stakeholders, which meets periodically on a monthly basis, regardless of whether new cases are to be discussed. The team – currently coordinated by social services – involves, in addition to social and employment services, all specialised local services (e.g. prevention services, marginalisation services, training providers, mental health services, autism services, addiction services, and prison-related services), as well as third-sector organisations.

The most structured form of integration between social and employment services is linked to the activation of specific projects such as ESF+-funded projects. In these cases, coordination is guided by project-specific procedures and tools, such as standardised forms and reporting templates. However, beyond these project-based frameworks, no shared tools, documentation systems, or digital platforms are currently in place to support systematic information exchange between services.

In the SdS Pisa area, access to social services mainly occurs through the Social Secretariat and is typically driven by urgent socio-economic needs (e.g. financial hardship, housing instability, family issues), rather than explicit employment requests. The interviewed operator works in the “Families and Minors” unit; therefore, LTUs are not treated as a distinct target group, and employment issues are addressed within broader, multidimensional situations of vulnerability. Access to Public Employment Services occurs through both formal channels – i.e., for beneficiaries of income-support measures subject to conditionality – and through direct access or referrals from social services. These referrals are generally not standardised and rely on direct communication between professionals.

Needs assessment processes are not harmonised across services. While employment services use structured tools (e.g. GOL profiling), social services adopt more flexible, case-by-case approaches. There is no shared assessment framework, and coordination is mostly informal, based on emails or phone contacts rather than structured multidisciplinary teams. The definition of personalised pathways is primarily led by employment services and are often programme-based or project-based. These typically include career guidance and profiling, training activities, job-search support, and work-based experiences such as traineeships, sometimes complemented by measures addressing language skills or work-life balance. Social services mainly provide complementary support, particularly in addressing urgent socio-economic needs.



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