



## MOCK Case Study AD Generalists



Participant Information

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## ASSIGNMENT

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

**This is a fictitious document produced solely for the purpose of this exercise. All references to existing states, international organisations, private companies, departments, their representatives etc. should be considered as mere examples. The views expressed do not represent the position of these bodies or persons. Participants are therefore advised to rely solely on the information provided and not on any prior expertise in the field when answering the questions.**

For this exercise, you will take on the role of an administrator at the Directorate-General for Employment. The documentation you need is included in this booklet. It comprises a number of e-mails, newspaper articles, and other information that you will have to analyse and digest in order to be able to deal properly with the assignment given to you. This is your first day in your new job.

It is important that you accept the scenario as it is presented to you. Although in real life you would have access to other sources of information and would be able to consult your colleagues, in this exercise you are limited to the information contained in the documents provided. You are, however, allowed to make logical assumptions where information is missing or incomplete.

You may rearrange the information in any order you wish and add remarks or make notes as necessary. However, remember that the assessors will base their evaluation exclusively on what you write on the lined paper that you have been given. Therefore, be sure to explain the reasoning behind your ideas and write down on the lined paper all the information on which you wish to be evaluated.

The case study is designed to assess the following competencies: Analysis & Problem Solving, Communicating (Drafting Skills), Delivering Quality & Results, and Prioritising & Organising.

**Specifically your task(s) will be to:**

**Prepare a briefing note for your Head of Unit in which you:**

- **discuss the main issues related to unemployment in Transyldavia;**
- **discuss the European initiatives that could be applicable in this case and explain why;**
- **make a concrete recommendation on what European actions to take regarding Mattyl, a regional company.**

In total, you have 90 minutes for this case study. Please answer as precisely as you can and write as clearly and legibly as possible.

**Please note:**

**Today is Monday, 9 January 201X**

**Last year was 201X-1, next year will be 201X+1**

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

Cedefop	European Centre for the development of vocational training
DG	Directorate General
EFP	Entrepreneurs for Progress
EFSH	European Fund for Structural Help
EGSF	European Global Support Fund
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HoU	Head of Unit
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises



**DG**  
**EMPLOYMENT**

**MAIL MESSAGE**

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From: Ramon Miscotas, HoU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Strategy,  
DG Employment  
To: <Your Name>  
Cc:  
Date: 09/01/201X  
Subject: Welcome

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Dear <Your name>,

Welcome to the Directorate-General for Employment. I have already prepared some assignments for you so that you can get started right away!

The regional government in Transyldavia has sent a letter to the Commission requesting help in relation to the large national company Mattyl, one of the biggest employers in the region. The company is in trouble and is close to bankruptcy.

As we have conducted studies on this region in the past, the Commission has requested our assistance in formulating a reply. Firstly, however, it is important that we give them a broader insight into the main unemployment-related issues in Transyldavia from an objective point of view. I would then like you to investigate which European initiatives could be applicable to the particular issues in the region. Thirdly, I would like you to draft a concrete recommendation on the European actions that could be taken for Mattyl, one of the biggest employers in Transyldavia.

I have asked my assistant to gather all information you might need.

Best regards,

**Ramon**



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar containing 'http://www.eu-indignados.org'. The website header features a logo of two stylized figures, the title 'European Association of Indignados', and navigation buttons for 'Home', 'About us', 'News', and 'Get involved'. The main content area is titled 'SPOTLIGHT ON TRANSYLDAVIA' and contains several paragraphs of text discussing the economic situation in Transylvania, including unemployment rates and the impact of the economic crisis. A bulleted list of proposed initiatives is also present, followed by a concluding statement about the Commission's responsibility.

**SPOTLIGHT ON TRANSYLDAVIA**

The situation in the labour market is gloomy; clearly, something is fundamentally wrong with the system, and this is made even worse by the fact that those most responsible for the problems have not even been sanctioned.

The OECD recently revealed that inequality among the working-age population increased by 10% from the middle of the 201X-30s to the middle of the 201X-10s. The economic crisis has worsened the situation further. Poverty remains unacceptably high, with 115 million Europeans (23% of the EU population) at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 201X. As you may know, the situation in the labour market is equally alarming. Europe's unemployment rate edged up to 9.7% in September 201X-1, while unemployment in the euro area also increased by the same proportion, hitting 10.2%.

Nowhere is the corruption of the economic system better illustrated than in the European region of Transyldavia. This once booming region has now declined into an unfortunate example of the flaws of the capitalist system, with an outlook that does not offer much hope.

Youth unemployment, in particular, is a key concern – as it is elsewhere in Europe – and has been growing at a rate of 21.4% a year since February 201X-1, reaching 85 000 in September 201X-1 in the Transyldavian region alone. The future remains uncertain, and there is a high risk of further deterioration.

However, this should come as no surprise if you consider that, even in these difficult times, regional and national governments and the European institutions make no effort at all to protect firms from bankruptcy or to ensure that firms remain in the region. If no companies remain in a region, how can jobs be ensured for its young people? And though it is clear that the Commission has no mandate to intervene in the commercial policy of banks, it should put a stop to the banking sector's behaviour in the Transyldavia area, where neither firms nor households can get credit and where outrageous payments and bonuses are lavished on banks' senior managers.

Therefore, to counteract the negative trends in Transyldavia, to support the basic rights of the people living there and to make their society a just and free one, we propose a number of initiatives that we believe the Commission should endorse:

- A minimum wage increase, especially for younger workers;
- Measures to combat unemployment (protection of European firms and workers);
- Subsidised rental housing that will guarantee shelter as a human right;
- Rules to force banks to do their job, i.e. to give credit, and increased regulation of the banking industry;
- Implementation of new fiscal measures by taxing the rich;
- Elimination of privileges for the political class.

We count on the Commission's sense of responsibility to make sure that citizens can again be proud to be part of Europe!


**WORKING GROUP ON LABOUR MARKET ISSUES**

<b>Date and time:</b>	15/12/201X-1 – 10.00 – 12.00
<b>Attendees:</b>	<ALL_Working group Members>
<b>Topics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Security versus flexibility</li> <li>– Research on Transyldavia</li> <li>– Worker mobility</li> </ul>

**TOPICS**
**Security versus flexibility**

Christopher presented a summary of the flexicurity concept put forward in the Commission's 'Jobs and skills policy'. He will make a thorough analysis of the effects of the strategy to date and will present recommendations at a following meeting.

Flexicurity is an integrated strategy that attempts to reconcile employers' need for a flexible workforce with workers' need for security. In practical terms, it consists of a set of four common principles that should help MS to implement it: (1) flexible and reliable contractual arrangements (2) comprehensive lifelong learning strategies (3) effective active labour market policies; and (4) modern social security systems.

**Research on Transyldavia**

New analysis by the European Commission has indicated that Transyldavia, like other EU regions, will require close monitoring because of the poor state of the economy in the region. In order to be pro-active, the working group will re-analyse the results of the research it carried out in 201X-5 in anticipation of a possible new request.

Violeta will take the lead in this, as she worked as principal researcher on this study. She indicated that one of the main topics in the previous study was the fact that the regional government decided to introduce temporary contracts on a large scale following the economic dip the region was going through. Subsequent analysis has shown that this decision had a positive impact on the region's economy in the year following the introduction of the policy.

**Worker mobility**

Ramon spoke about a new research topic on the impact of worker mobility on local unemployment and, in particular, the risks of a brain drain, and asked if there were any volunteers to start work on this.

Published: 16.11.201X-1

# EUROPE TODAY

AHEAD OF THE NEWS

## Europe's complicated relationship with the labour markets

The events of recent years, have clearly highlighted the need for a more integrated approach to labour markets: a financial and economic crisis turned into a debt crisis and extensive recovery packages were followed by a wave of austerity measures by most Member State governments. We could ask what Europe's role should be, given that the social consequences of the economic crisis have made efficient, well-targeted policies in the MS more crucial than ever, while labour policy is not a matter for the Commission but rather one for the MS themselves.

In this context, the European Fund for Structural Help (EFSH) can serve as an example. While the Fund itself is managed by the EU, the projects it funds can be diverse. Examples of projects initiated this year include: 'Prosperity on the streets', a project that created a network of youth social workers in Paris and 'Rising to the top', an international programme for young graduates in Portugal. The EFSH does not fund projects directly from Brussels; individual projects are run by participating organisations (known as 'initiators'). An initiator designs a project, applies for funding and, if this is granted, implements the project. There are many different types of EFSH project initiators: public administrations, NGOs, social partners and companies active in the field of employment and social inclusion. It takes a maximum of only three months from application for funding to be granted.

In any case, it looks as if yet another chapter in the story of policy measures to address labour market issues, especially in times of crisis, will begin in the new year.

### TRANSYLDAVIA: ILLUSTRATIVE OF EUROPE AS A WHOLE?

The Transyldavia region is all set to become a worry for European leaders. Our correspondent spoke to academic Fabian Moulieras, who has been living in the region for almost 10 years, to try to shed some light on recent events.

Q: Can you comment on the recent increase in reports of youngsters causing disturbances?

A: Yes indeed, while this has been a problem for years, the issue has rapidly deteriorated in the last couple of months. These young people are unemployed and bored, and they feel they have nothing to lose. When you look at this from a broader perspective, it seems to me that the structural problem of the mismatch between educational programmes and industrial needs lies at the heart of the problem. This lack of skills can send people into a vicious circle of continuous unemployment, a fate that awaits most of these young people.

Q: Transyldavia has one of the highest proportions of ageing workers of any workforce in Europe, and at the same time has the highest elderly unemployment rate. Is the lack of appropriate skills also at play here?

A: True, elderly unemployment is a problem. Skills are indeed key in this matter; however, the real cause of the problem lies not so much in the lack of the right education, but rather in the fact that many of the older workers were hit by the introduction of part-time employment, with companies replacing expensive older workers with cheaper younger ones. Furthermore, older workers have difficulty adapting to fast-paced changes in the skillsets required at work.

P.A.K. Patterson

Europe Today of 16.11.201X-1  
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**DG  
EMPLOYMENT**

**MAIL MESSAGE**

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From: Violeta Doremi, Assistant, Social Protection and Social Inclusion Strategy Unit,  
DG Employment  
To: Ramon Miscotas, HoU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Strategy, DG  
Employment  
Cc:  
Date: 28/12/201X-1  
Subject: Working group's agenda 201X

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Dear Ramon,

I have a number of extra suggestions for topics to put on the agenda for the Labour Market Issues working group next year.

Firstly, European labour markets will be profoundly changed by the crisis. Workers and companies must be given the means to adjust successfully to these changing realities, i.e. the means to retain secure jobs, enhance skills at all levels, get people back to work and set the conditions for new job creation. The Commission is currently working on the European Global Support Fund (EGSF) to support workers who lose their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns. The EGSF can help redundant workers to find new jobs as quickly as possible when a large enterprise shuts down or when a factory is relocated to a country outside the EU, or even when many jobs are lost in one sector in a particular region. A maximum amount of €4 billion per year is available to the EGSF to finance such interventions.

Secondly, we should further investigate the European Learning Programme, which enables people at all stages of their lives to take part in stimulating learning experiences. It offers a variety of opportunities, as it includes sub-programmes for different levels of education and training (one-year exchange programmes, long-term internships and master classes in a one- or two-year programme) spread out over several years.

Regards,

**Violeta**



September 201X-1

## EFP SEMINARS – WHAT CAN EUROPE OFFER US

There are some interesting facilities and mechanisms on offer within Europe that are, it seems, not always very well known. Therefore, the next seminar will explain one of the most interesting initiatives, the European Fund for Structural Help, in more detail.

The EFSH is one of the EU Structural Funds set up to reduce disparities in prosperity and living standards across the EU's MS and regions. The EFSH is devoted to promoting employment in the EU and its funding is spread across MS and regions, focusing in particular on those where economic development is less advanced.

Take a sneak preview of two of the topics for the next seminar:

- The EU has developed European standards to be used for technical harmonisation of product requirements within the Single Market and rules for consumer protection (DG Health and Consumer). [Click here for more information.](#)
- Fighting cartels and preventing the abuse of dominant market positions are the two priorities of the EU anti-trust policy. [Click here for more information.](#)

Learn more about what Europe can offer you and your company. Subscribe now for the upcoming and following seminars at [www.entrepreneurs-progress.eu/seminars](http://www.entrepreneurs-progress.eu/seminars).

**European Trade Unions****MAIL MESSAGE**

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From: Guy Mamaison, European Trade Unions  
To: Ramon Miscotas, HoU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Strategy, DG Employment  
Cc:  
Date: 03/01/201X  
Subject: Initiative for enterprises

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Dear Mr Miscositas

I am writing to you as the union representative of Mattyl workers in Transyldavia. The company is reportedly close to bankruptcy, and the management is threatening to move some of the main production lines abroad to save costs.

The company's employees have already had to cope with many setbacks over the past few years, and this would be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Too much has already been asked of them and they are in urgent need of more security. I therefore intend to call upon Europe for help. What we suggest is that the company should apply for EFSH funding and should then use the money granted to keep production lines in Transyldavia.

I notice that your name is on the list of speakers for next month's conference on unemployment in Strasbourg – I would like us to meet up to discuss this and other possibilities, and in particular, the many initiatives put forward by DG Enterprise and Industry and DG Internal Market. I have heard that the EU is working on an initiative for SMEs and larger enterprises to harmonise rules relating to company law, contract law, accounting and public procurement. As this could be of great interest not only to Mattyl but also to some of the other companies I represent, I would like to learn more about it.

Kind regards,

**Guy Mamaison**



## DISCUSSION FORUM

*Printable version*

**Last week, Liberal delegate Cristoforo Delluci made a plea in the national Parliament to reduce or even scrap minimum wages in order to give our firms an economic advantage, enabling them to become better adapted and prepared for times of economic and financial crisis.**

My friends and I have just graduated from university, some of us with a PhD! But why would we look for jobs here? To work hard for little money and without any future prospects? This new proposal from Mr Delluci is yet another illustration of the downward spiral we find ourselves in.

*Posted by Ana Karenski on 06/01/201X 16.01*

I am president of the local business association in Transyldavia, and I would just like to add that many of us are having difficulty finding the right people to hire, even though we still have quite a lot of vacancies for certain profiles. We have recently had to hire immigrants from the Maghreb and eastern parts of Russia to fill many such vacancies and this is working out fine.

*Posted by Robert Patterson on 06/01/201X 15.11*

I am one of these so-called youngsters that are causing trouble. I can assure you that many of us have been looking for jobs, however unsuccessfully. The reality is that a lot of jobs are disappearing abroad, and when a job does become available, we are overlooked because we lack the appropriate skills. Why should we even bother any more? I think you will agree that the situation in Transyldavia is pretty hopeless.

*Posted by Kasja Henriksson 06/01/201X 12.05*

Giorgio, I feel I must add another perspective to your comment. Blaming the problems these youngsters are causing on external factors such as wages seems a bit naïve from your side. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, I can only suggest that these people take a good look at themselves and go out and find a job like everyone else!

*Posted by Romain Gauvin on 06/01/201X 11.58*

This shows how out-of-touch some of our politicians are. Last month they revealed figures showing an increase in incidents involving youngsters hanging around and causing trouble and disturbances. Can they really not see the link? As if decreasing minimum wages will not make these problems worse!

*Posted by Giorgio Castiglione on 06/01/201X 08.24*

You are so right. About 10 years ago, these same politicians convinced us that becoming part of the EU would be a good thing for our country, but look where we are now: dragged down in a crisis with the rest of Europe. If becoming part of Europe was really such a good idea, let Europe now prove it by getting the Commission to put a stop to this ridiculous idea!

*Posted by Royce Zandvliet on 05/01/201X 23.02*

This is unbelievable. I hope he does not think he will get away with this; the unions will take a firm stand! People are already working for much longer following the government's decision a few years back to put a stop to early retirement. Recent analysis has indicated that almost 20% of the working population is over 50, and now they want to cut wages! Such a lack of respect for hardworking people is mind blowing!

*Posted by Antonin Marek on 05/01/201X 19.17*



**DG**  
**EMPLOYMENT**

**MAIL MESSAGE**

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From: Mircea Polidentescu, Commissioner Cabinet, DG Employment  
To: Ramon Miscotas, HoU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Strategy,  
DG Employment  
Cc:  
Date: 04/01/201X  
Subject: FW: Urgent request

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Dear Ramon,

As discussed earlier, I am forwarding you the mail we received from Transylvanian regional government representative Krystyn Timur on the difficulties faced by the company Mattyl in the Transyldavia region.

As regards poverty, I have not been able to gather all the figures; however; the DG recently issued the first annual review of Employment and Social Development in Europe. The review stresses that, besides people on continuous temporary contracts, the elderly, lone parents and low-work intensity households are at particular risk of poverty and social exclusion. Over 8% of people with a job (the 'working poor') are at risk of poverty.

Improving the employability of older workers and encouraging active ageing are key elements of the 'Older and more active' strategy, the aim of which is to help reach the EU employment rate target of 75% by 201X+12. The strategy provides a framework for EU countries to discuss and share information and to coordinate their policies to increase the employment rate of older workers. In Poland, for example, the '45/50+' programme and the 'Solidarity between Generations' strategy aim to promote employment for older workers in the labour market through action in a number of areas.

Finally, as regards EGSF measures, you should be able to find all the information on the DG's website. Put concisely, the EGSF provides measures that support the re-introduction of people into the labour market. These include financial measures, such as assistance for job-seekers, careers advice, tailor-made training and re-training and promoting entrepreneurship, and measures to provide one-off, time-limited individual support, such as job-seekers' allowances, mobility allowances and allowances for participating in lifelong learning and training activities.

I hope this information is useful.

Best regards,

**Mircea**

----- Forwarded by [mircea.polidentescu@commission.europa.eu](mailto:mircea.polidentescu@commission.europa.eu) - 04/01/201X -----

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From: Krystyn Timur, Representative, Regional government of Transyldavia  
To: Paul Argutis, Commissioner for Employment, DG Employment  
Cc: Mircea Polidentescu, Commissioner Cabinet, DG Employment  
Date: 03/01/201X  
Subject: Urgent request

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Dear Mr Argutis,

I am taking the liberty of sending you this email because Transyldavia, an important region in Europe, is suffering badly.

Companies are moving away and unemployment is rising. To make matters worse, our source of national pride – Mattyl S.A., the headquarters of which are in Transyldavia – is close to bankruptcy. The company has been one of the largest employers in the region for almost 100 years. I cannot even start to imagine what will happen if this ‘institution’ disappears. Therefore, I would like to ask the Commission to step forward and do everything in its power to save Mattyl, to ensure that over 1 000 people can keep their jobs and so save Transyldavia from further social disaster.

I consider it my personal mission to prove to the many people who voted for me as a strong believer in Europe that Europe will not let them down. My country has been pumping money into funds such as the EGSF for years; the time has now come to put these funds to use. Since it is only the beginning of the year, I assume that the budget for the EGSF is still largely intact, so I cannot imagine that providing some additional unemployment benefits to the people who will lose their incomes will pose any problems. This has to be done so that we can at least prevent any more people from falling into poverty. In addition, I would like to ask the Commission to put pressure on the banking sector to provide more low-interest loans in order to help Mattyl overcome this crisis and retain as much of the workforce as possible.

Please do not let the people of Transyldavia down; they deserve your help just as much as the people of any other region within the EU.

Yours sincerely,

**Krystyn Timur**  
*MEP Transyldavia*

Published: 15.12.201X-1

# EYE ON THE NEWS

REGIONAL NEWS FIRST

## Transyldavia: from beauty to beast?

The once thriving region of Transyldavia is well on its way to becoming our country's main source of concern. The unemployment rate has been around 18% for more than a year, while the proportion of long-term unemployed is over 45% and rising.

This region, in which the textile industry dominates, has been in trouble for years. While some companies have moved away, or have at least moved many of their production processes abroad to low-wage countries, many of the more specialised processes have remained. However, as a result of the fast-moving developments in the sector, job requirements have become very specific, and more and more companies have begun to attract experts from abroad.

Moreover, it seems that offering temporary contracts – a measure initially introduced to overcome difficult times – has become the rule rather than the exception, and many people have given up trying to find a steady job. As a result, poverty is rising and the region has been caught in a downward spiral.

Calling on Europe to help seems to be the only way out. Is that not why 80% of us voted so many years ago to become part of Europe in the first place? Was it not so we could hope for a more prosperous future and benefit from the solidarity between MS if necessary?



Or so that we could at least benefit from shared expertise? In France, the 'solidarity income' (*revenu de solidarité active*), which has been generally applicable since mid-201X-3, is both a minimum income for those not working and an income supplement for those who have found a new job that pays a wage lower than the allowances they previously received. A possibility for Transyldavia perhaps?

J.D. Jacobs

Eye on the news of 15.12.201X-1

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