



# Oral Presentation (remote)

**Open Competition  
EPSO/AD/373/19  
Administrators (AD5)**

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**Presentation: 5 + 15 minutes**

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**Version 3**

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# ASSIGNMENT

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

**This document presents a fictitious scenario. It has been produced solely for the purpose of this exercise. All references to existing countries, international organisations, private companies, departments and their representatives, etc. have been invented purely as examples. Any views expressed should not be taken to represent the opinions of those bodies or persons. When dealing with the assignment, participants should therefore rely solely on the information presented in the exercise and not on any prior expertise in the field.**

For this exercise, you will take on the role of an administrator who is asked to participate in an inter-institutional Working Group dealing with the Revision of the Employment Strategy (WGRES). The documentation you need is included in this booklet. It comprises a number of emails, reports 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. 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 provided. You are, however, allowed to make logical assumptions where information is missing or incomplete. You may print the documents, rearrange them in any order you wish and add comments or make notes as necessary; these documents and your notes will remain available to you during the Oral Presentation.

This Oral Presentation aims at assessing the following competencies: Analysis & Problem Solving, Communication and Resilience. Your knowledge in the field will not be assessed; therefore, conducting additional research is unnecessary.

You are expected to prepare a **presentation** in which you give an overview of the current situation regarding employment in the European Union (EU). On the day of the Assessment Centre, you will have 5 minutes to give your presentation. This will be followed by a 15-minute question and answer session, during which the assessors will ask you specific **questions**.

**Please note:  
Today is Wednesday, 7 June 20XX  
Last year was 20XX-1, next year will be 20XX+1**

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACP	Advancement Coaching Programme
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ES	Employment Strategy
EU	European Union
MS	Member State(s)
WGRES	Working Group dealing with the Revision of the Employment Strategy

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In an effort to create more and better jobs for all, the European Union (EU) follows a detailed multi-annual employment strategy (ES), which has been designed to help (a) create an accurate, up-to-date overview of the employment situation across the EU, (b) identify areas in need of improvement and (c) outline specific actions to introduce necessary changes. The ES is revised periodically, via a process in which the European Commission proposes a number of updates and refinements based on the outcome of repeated consultations with experts and stakeholders. Depending on their nature, ES proposals need the approval of the Council of the EU (and sometimes of the European Parliament) before they can be implemented. The most important stakeholders at local level within the Member States (MS) are the national governments, professional organisations, unions, non-governmental organisations, etc.

To assess the effects of actions carried out under the ES, the EU uses — among other data — social statistics gathered by the national statistical offices of the MS and collated as partial indicators of progress. The current ES (20XX-5 to 20XX+1) is entering its final phase this year. Input for a new ES (covering the period 20XX+2 to 20XX+8 and based on the lessons learned from the current ES) is already being collected by an informal working group, the Working Group dealing with the Revision of the Employment Strategy (WGRES). This group is currently taking a close look at the current ES and all related feedback from the parties involved, and it is assessing all available information in order to gauge the potential political impact of the new ES. WGRES's proposals will be elaborated in greater detail by the competent services.

Stimulating employment opportunities will always be one of the ES's top priorities. Specifically, to boost the economy and benefit the entire workforce, the EU aims actively to reduce all forms of unemployment and to maximise EU citizens' chances of employment.

Other goals of the ES include increasing employee access to more varied and flexible working arrangements and ensuring that every worker has equal opportunity for promotion and career advancement, regardless of their working arrangements. The current ES encourages MS to promote flexible working arrangements in order to optimise the work-life balance of citizens. Practical examples include promoting part-time work, flexible hours, teleworking, etc., all of which have been shown to boost productivity and enhance employee satisfaction, given that they accommodate people who might otherwise be unable to work at all.

**Welcome Mail**

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From: Max Weinberg, Working Group Chair, WGRES  
To: <Your name>, Administrator, WGRES  
Date: 07/06/20XX  
Subject: Welcome

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Dear <Your name>,

Welcome to the Working Group and thank you for taking on your role so quickly.

In order to get you properly settled into your new job, I have already compiled and sent you some documents that might be useful for you.

I have also scheduled in a meeting for us to discuss some issues before the next WGRES meeting.

Kind regards,

**Max**

## Strategy Excerpt

07/03/20XX-5

**EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY 20XX-5 TO 20XX+1 (SUMMARY)**

[...]

**GOALS****• Addressing unemployment**

Major causes of unemployment throughout the EU should be addressed by a number of employment actions under this ES. Specific actions could include organising job fairs, creating traineeships, etc. At this stage, it has been decided not to target specific subgroups of the unemployed (e.g. based on education level, age or duration of unemployment). A person is considered to be long-term unemployed when he/she has not worked for a period of more than one year while actively continuing to seek work.

**• Encouraging part-time work**

The EU's goal for part-time work is to improve the availability of part-time jobs so that suitable working arrangements can be provided for employees who want to be able to work more flexibly. Actions to promote part-time work (i.e. any working arrangements covering fewer hours than a standard full-time schedule) include campaigns to (a) raise employee awareness of part-time work, (b) encourage companies to adopt part-time working arrangements and (c) promote inclusion of part-time workers.

[...]

## Working conditions in EU MS

As part of our continued analysis of workforce trends, we examine developments in employment and unemployment and their possible consequences.

### Finding work

Data from several employment organisations indicate that, as a result of five years of ES actions, jobseekers at present have less difficulty finding a job that matches their requirements. To support the remaining unemployed, certain measures designed to improve current welfare systems have been introduced. The MS need to be able to manage their limited finances through these systems; therefore, anyone who loses their job will initially receive a full allowance, but their benefits will then be gradually reduced until, after a period of around 2.5 years (on average), they receive only the bare minimum.

Government employment services provide assistance to the unemployed in their search for a new job. However, these services are rarely compulsory and not many people currently choose to make use of them.

Long-term unemployed people form a specific subgroup of the unemployed population. Interviews reveal that, after being out of work for so long, these people often feel that they have lost any connection they had with the workplace. Moreover, some say that they are unsure about how best to search for a job or that they lack certain skills required for any jobs that are available. Looking at the raw data in more detail, it is clear that young people without work experience who have not completed their secondary education face even greater difficulties obtaining employment and are twice as likely to become long-term unemployed.

### Working part time

Increasing the number of part-time jobs is still proving quite difficult at times. For example, high-level jobs are simply too complex to reduce to one part-time function, especially if the part-time function holder does not receive any assistance. Additionally, people often find it difficult to share the responsibilities of a higher-level job, and conflicts can arise over who has final responsibility.

In a new development, some companies have begun implementing Advancement Coaching Programmes (ACPs); others, however, seem to have some reservations about doing so. Perhaps such companies could trial the use of ACPs at a lower level (for mid-level functions, for example). However, no practical guidelines currently exist for this.

### Stephen Katts

Published: 12.02.20XX

# EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

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## Workforce problems

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*In the past, many EU citizens have struggled with the difficulty not only of finding employment but also of combining the jobs they do find with their family responsibilities.*

Further analysis of unemployment figures reveals a subgroup of long-term unemployed people, who together account for around 30.7 % of the total unemployed population. The available statistics suggest that this subgroup comprises a diverse range of people with many different issues and needs. Long-term unemployment has an economic impact, as it reduces consumer demand and thereby slows economic growth. Reducing the scale of the long-term unemployment issue would therefore also have a beneficial effect on the economic growth rate.

Though championed by many, the increase in part-time jobs has also inadvertently created an imbalance: the lack of suitable part-time jobs for people with post-secondary-level qualifications puts anyone who wishes to work part time in such a function at a considerable disadvantage.

The EU should therefore encourage public bodies to set an example by making jobs at all levels available under both part and full-time arrangements, thereby enabling employees to share a position through complementary part-time arrangements.

To be able to offer more elaborate part-time working options and to stimulate internal mobility, some companies have introduced ACPs, in which employees spend part of their working time in a higher position to acquire the necessary skills for promotion.

Even though all current welfare systems in the EU already reduce unemployment benefits over time, MS Antegria launched a pilot project to explore the effects of making conditions much stricter and reducing benefits much more quickly (reaching absolute minimum income after only nine months of unemployment). The idea behind this project was to support the involuntarily unemployed in the early stages of unemployment but also to encourage them strongly to find a new job as quickly as possible. The initial results of this pilot will be available soon.



**Review of figures related to the current ES**

[...]

Figures indicate that the average employment rate throughout the EU has increased from 53.7 % in 20XX-6 to 60.4 % in 20XX.

[...]

The significance of the long-term unemployment issue can be seen from the following results:

The indicators of the EU's statistical office reveal that the relative size of the long-term unemployed subgroup has increased over the recent years: while the employment rate in general has increased, the number of long-term unemployed people instead of dropping, has in fact risen.

Statistics indicate that people are less inclined to look actively for new employment if their unemployment benefits allow them to maintain their existing lifestyle.

At the moment, the only data and figures available are very general and relate to the long-term unemployed group as a whole. Analyses cannot be made at a person-by person level, which means that members of this group rarely receive any support tailored specifically to their individual situations.

[...]

**WGRES Meeting No 4****Suggestions for the new ES (excerpt):**

- Promoting professional development
  - Promoting ACPs on a large scale would stimulate the development of part-time working arrangements for higher-level employees, as it would allow them to delegate certain tasks while retaining final responsibility themselves.
  - Continuity in an ACP is guaranteed by having multiple coaches involved in the programme at all times and by always having someone available to start a new phase. This ensures that all coachees receive several years of thorough leadership training.
- Unemployment issues
  - The longer someone is unemployed, the lower their individual value on the job market; unused skills can be forgotten, and the chances of finding work are greatly reduced. This often leads to a vicious circle of negative feelings and lower employment prospects.
  - In MS Antegria, a pilot project in which unemployment benefits were reduced more rapidly than is normally the case yielded positive results from the start: there was an almost immediate increase in the employment rate.
  - Within each MS, welfare agencies provide income to unemployed people and the employment services try to help them return to work. However, there is currently only very limited interaction between these bodies in the individual MS, and they share information only on people's employment status.

**NEW INITIATIVES TO MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES**

In this report we present the findings from our most recent annual analysis of the European labour market.

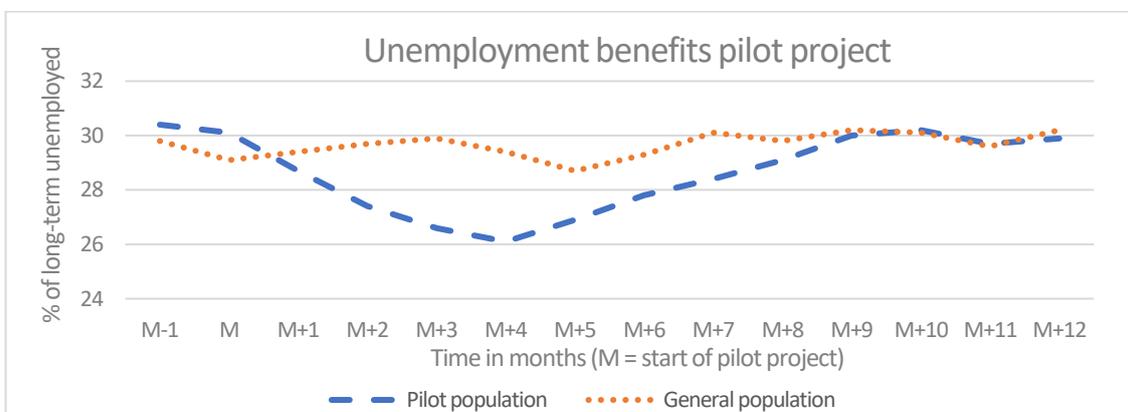
First and foremost, the number of people choosing to work part time has increased significantly in recent years, and combined they now make up around 24 % of all employees in the EU. However, anyone wishing to work part time faces a highly unbalanced labour market. Some workforce experts believe that the qualitative differences between part and full-time jobs can be reduced by encouraging companies to make a greater number of high-level jobs available under part-time working arrangements. Public bodies should lead by example and implement this practice first.

[...]

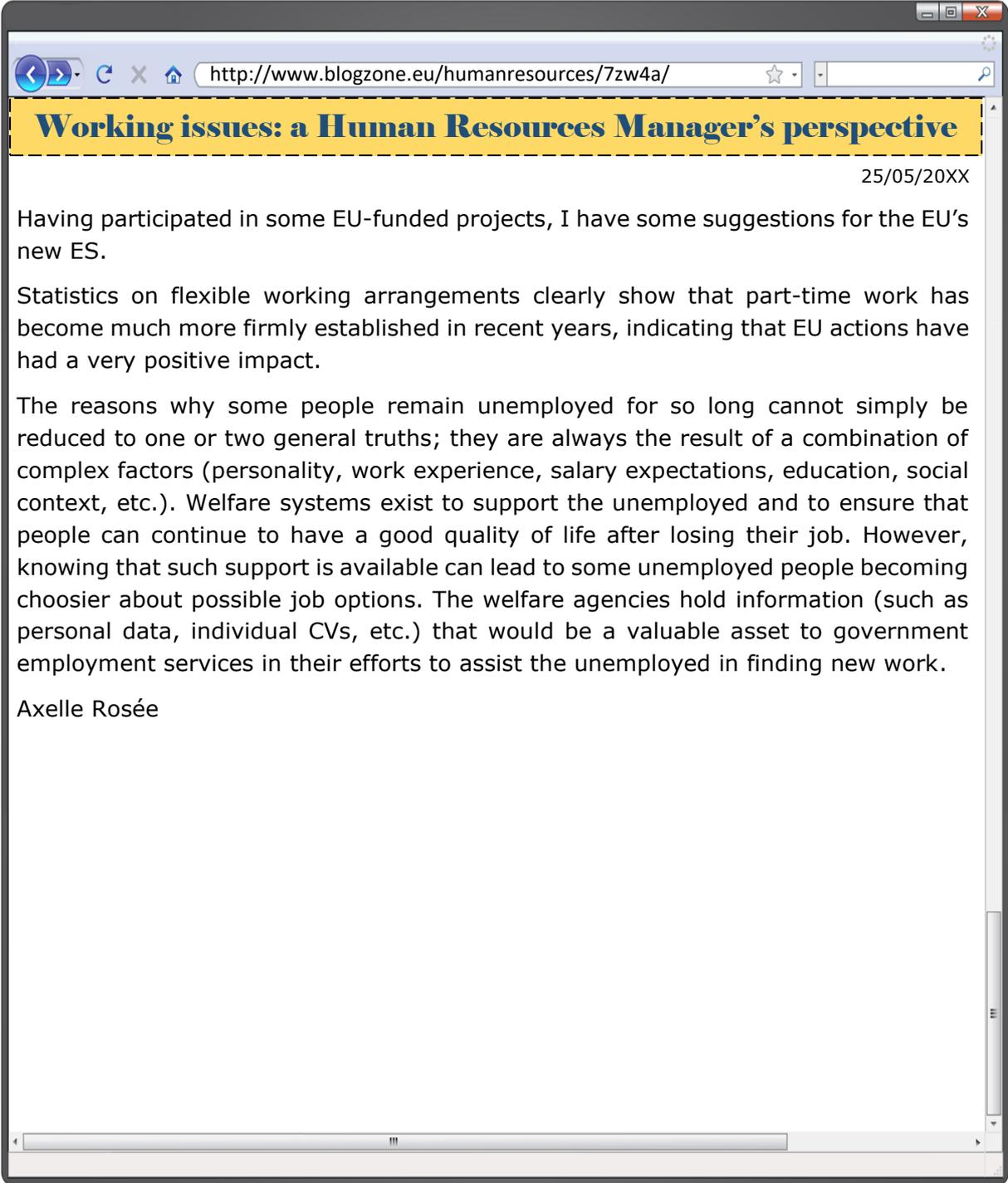
A number of companies have started implementing ACPs — a new leadership initiative whereby junior and middle-level employees are ‘shown the ropes’ of higher positions on the job. These programmes open up certain possibilities for an organisation, such as coachees providing back-up for the primary position holders — however, in order to be able to carry out their own tasks in addition to those of the person they are deputising for, all coachees are required to work full time. General decision-making responsibility naturally always remains with the primary position holder; however, it is worth noting that coachees in some of these companies are asked to provide their input on important decisions. They then discuss the pros and cons of their suggestions with their coaches, which helps them gradually learn the nuts and bolts of high-level decision making.

[...]

Closer inspection of the long-term unemployed subgroup reveals that it comprises citizens of all ages, nationalities and gender. To tackle this problem, MS Antegria launched a pilot project during which unemployment benefits were reduced more quickly.



*Effects of the project on the percentage of the long-term unemployed*



The image shows a screenshot of a web browser window. The address bar contains the URL <http://www.blogzone.eu/humanresources/7zw4a/>. The page title is "Working issues: a Human Resources Manager's perspective". The date "25/05/20XX" is displayed in the top right corner. The main content of the page consists of three paragraphs of text, followed by the author's name "Axelle Rosée".

**Working issues: a Human Resources Manager's perspective**

25/05/20XX

Having participated in some EU-funded projects, I have some suggestions for the EU's new ES.

Statistics on flexible working arrangements clearly show that part-time work has become much more firmly established in recent years, indicating that EU actions have had a very positive impact.

The reasons why some people remain unemployed for so long cannot simply be reduced to one or two general truths; they are always the result of a combination of complex factors (personality, work experience, salary expectations, education, social context, etc.). Welfare systems exist to support the unemployed and to ensure that people can continue to have a good quality of life after losing their job. However, knowing that such support is available can lead to some unemployed people becoming choosier about possible job options. The welfare agencies hold information (such as personal data, individual CVs, etc.) that would be a valuable asset to government employment services in their efforts to assist the unemployed in finding new work.

Axelle Rosée

### Subject: Lack of part-time options

Has anyone else noticed how tough it is to find a part-time job above a certain level? Personally, I feel that my career has ground to a halt because there are hardly any part-time jobs available that match my level or aspirations. I really believe that dividing higher-level functions into equal part-time roles would be the perfect way to allow more highly skilled staff to combine an ambitious career with a full home life.

*Posted by Nick C. on 01/03/20XX*

I fear that it is impossible to split some positions between two people, as it would be extremely difficult to ensure that certain tasks are consistently carried out by the person who is ultimately responsible for them. What do you think about ACPs? Maybe these could open up new options for promotion and part-time work.

*Posted by Veronica E. on 03/03/20XX*

I'm sorry to say this, but ACPs are not the answer to the problem of balancing part-time working arrangements, as there will always be an issue with accountability and responsibilities.

*Posted by Frank Z. on 08/03/20XX*

### Subject: Addressing long-term unemployment

This has become quite an important issue, and I was wondering if anyone knows of any new ways to tackle long-term unemployment. I read about a pilot project in Antegria, which explored the effects of reducing unemployment benefits more quickly. I personally feel that the project featured a very punitive system designed to penalise rather than to motivate the unemployed; in fact, it even punished people who were already actively looking for work. Moreover, reducing someone's unemployment benefits so quickly could also have repercussions for their family members — their children for example.

*Posted by Alice C. on 05/04/20XX*

I fully agree with your point. Personally, I feel that there is no quick fix for this issue. I would suggest that the employment services should intervene whenever anybody reaches the six-month unemployment mark in order to prevent them becoming yet another victim of long-term unemployment.

*Posted by Eric C. on 12/04/20XX*



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20/10/20XX-1

## **Internal Report on ES implementation in the MS**

This report examines various improvements to employment and the workforce that have been made in the different MS under the ES.

- Each individual MS has its own welfare system, on which it takes decisions in line with national legislation. Currently, the systems in most MS guarantee that unemployed individuals receive government financial support to sustain them in the event of them losing their job involuntarily.
- The welfare agencies in charge of distributing unemployment benefits require anyone seeking assistance to register with them and to submit basic personal information (e.g. name, date of unemployment, CVs) before they can receive any financial support.

**Email**

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From: Roisin Orbo, Social Affairs & Inclusion Unit, Directorate General for Employment  
To: Max Weinberg, Working Group Chair, WGRES  
Date: 10/05/20XX  
Subject: Issues to address in the new ES

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Dear Max,

I would like to share some thoughts on the new ES.

Thorough analysis reveals that the majority of available part-time jobs are intended for people with only a primary or secondary-level education. Some people believe that to address this issue all employers should be encouraged to ensure that the full-time jobs they offer can also be split up into a number of part-time equivalents. However, I would argue that many higher-level positions have associated responsibilities that simply cannot be divided among two or more individuals.

The issue of long-term unemployment cannot be overlooked. It is important to note that not all cases of long-term unemployment result from a lack of motivation. For example, many employers feel hesitant about hiring someone who has been unemployed for more than a year, and therefore they often prefer to recruit people who have enjoyed a more stable career path. Many long-term unemployed people say that they are actively trying to find a job but that they do not know exactly what they are doing wrong — perhaps some form of practical assistance could help them be more successful in their search for a job. I personally feel that if more information was available on the specific individuals who make up this subgroup, it could help some of them break their individual pattern of long-term unemployment.

Kind regards,

**Roisin**

**Email**

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From: Chris Aysech, Member, WGRES  
To: Max Weinberg, Working Group Chair, WGRES  
Date: 03/06/20XX  
Subject: Recommendations for next meeting

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Dear Max,

As I will be unable to attend our next working group meeting, could you please follow up these issues on my behalf?

Research shows that while many long-term unemployed people do not suffer from motivational issues, they do have other difficulties, such as finding a job that matches their specific expertise or their wage expectations. However, at the moment, the focus is on the long-term unemployed as a group. Hardly any attention is given to investigating individual situations, while equally little effort is made to establish the specific, unique strengths that could help someone compete better in the job market.

Furthermore, government employment services and welfare agencies sometimes have a bad reputation, and they are often perceived as working poorly together and having little interaction with each other because of strict data protection rules.

Kind regards,

**Chris**