

WAPES world Congress 2021

AMS Austria: lessons learnt from the crisis.

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Austrian PES („Arbeitsmarktservice“)

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Tasks of AMS

Organisation

- Decentralised system: 1 central, 9 regional, 100 local offices
- 5.883 staff
- **Unemployment rate 2021:** 8.1 % (EUROSTAT 4.9 %) -3,4 % 2020

Labour Market Policy

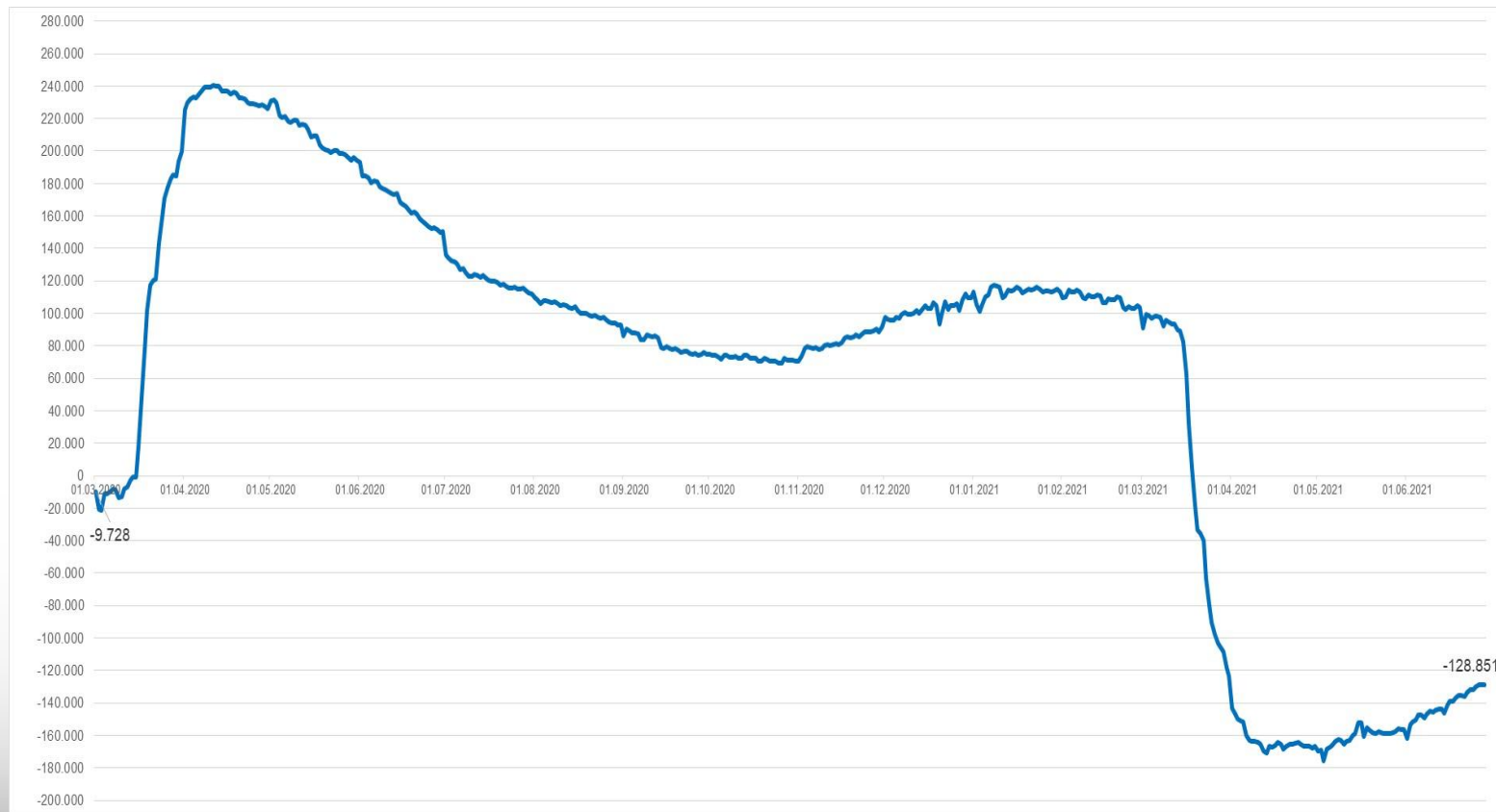
- Placements (service for jobseekers)
- Recruitment (service for employers)
- Labour market intelligence/career information
- Active labour market policy
 - ✓ Qualification (training courses)
 - ✓ employment promotion (wage subsidies)
 - ✓ support measures (special counselling)
- Access to the labour market for 3rd county nationals

Benefits

- Unemployment insurance

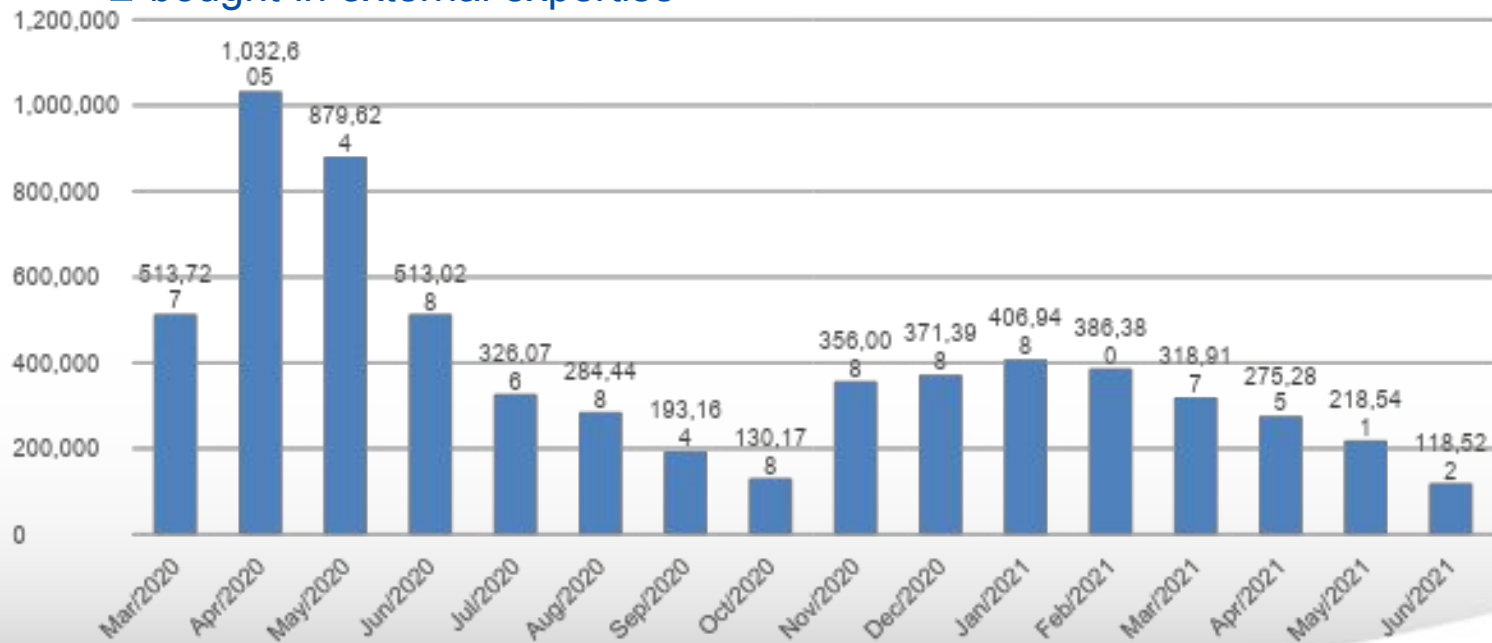
Immediate effects for the organisation

- Sharp increase in the unemployment rate
- sharp increase in the requests for unemployment benefits



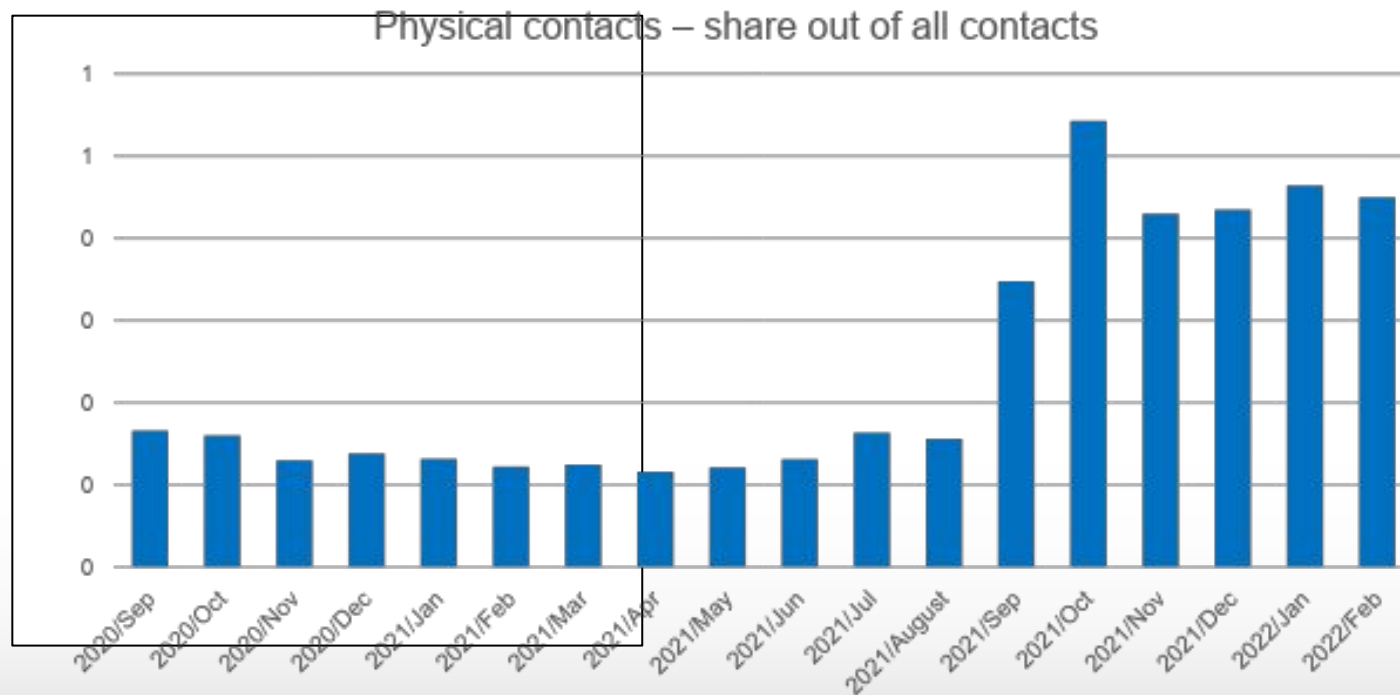
Immediate effects for the organisation

- Implementation of a (new) short-time-work model
 - PES main responsible organisation for the administration
 - unprecedented high amount of applications
 - not enough skilled colleagues to deal with short time work
 - bought-in external expertise



Immediate effects for the organisation

- Rapid necessary channel switch
 - physical contacts vs. telephone (no video calls)
 - Before the crisis 100% physical contacts



Lessons learnt I: proven structures

- It is an advantage if **proven structures** and processes are in place, above all if fluctuations are common.
 - unemployment benefit applications
- In turn: it proved difficult in case **new processes** had to be established
 - Prioritisation of a few central and necessary processes: availability, STW, UB: all others needed to be scaled down

Lessons learnt II: flexibility – a factor for success

- The pandemic forced us to implement a **radical shift in our channel strategy**. This necessitates several changes in the legal framework.
Example: Request for unemployment benefits through telephone
 1. Before Corona: exclusively personal claim in a jobcentre
 2. During pandemic: through online service
 3. Now: online application, but jobseeker need to show up in a jobcentre within a week
- Training courses needed to switch to **online formats** where possible/available. Flexibility in the **contract design** crucial in case of cancellation, adaptation and redesign.
- Several strategy changes: pandemic urged flexibility according to the labour market developments
 1. At the beginning of the crisis: provide **income security for unemployed** □ unemployment benefits claims
 2. Launch of **biggest qualification programme** to secure skilled workforce after the crisis
 3. Economic recovery faster than anticipated: **rapid placements** top priority

Lessons learnt III: internal

□ Teleworking arrangements: introduction

- offices remained open in general (critical infrastructure), but jobseekers invited to not come to the jobcentres.
- challenging adaptation and implementation: infrastructure (notebooks, vpns...)

□ Teleworking arrangements: today

- colleagues back to the office, but teleworking now more flexible than before the crisis
- perception of teleworking has changed: image has improved
- persisting different views on what teleworking arrangements should pursued

□ Overall collegiality and solidarity valued very high during the crisis

Looking forward

- Current organisational reforms influenced by the pandemic eg. **career information** for students also as **online format**
- **New service delivery model** in the jobcentre delayed due to pandemic. Now lessons from the pandemic will feed into.
- **Digitalisation** remains a top priority. Political commitment including financial commitment to constantly update the IT infrastructure.