

Foreword

Giving people better opportunities to participate in the labour market improves well-being and strengthens economic growth. Better labour market and social protection policies help countries to cope with rapid population ageing by mobilising potential labour resources more fully. Many OECD countries achieved record employment levels prior to the global financial crisis, but in all countries employment rates differ markedly across population groups. High unemployment, weak labour market attachment of some groups in society, and frequently unstable, poor-quality employment reflects a range of barriers to working or moving up the jobs ladder. In many countries the crisis has accentuated long-standing structural problems that are causing these disadvantages. It is a major challenge for policy makers in the coming years to address these problems and make OECD labour markets and, thus, OECD economies more inclusive.

Therefore, the OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee is carrying out a set of reviews of labour market and social protection policies to encourage greater labour market participation and better employment among all groups in society with a special focus on the most disadvantaged, who face the greatest barriers and disincentives to finding good work. This includes a series of country studies, *Connecting People with Jobs*, which provide an assessment of how well activation policies help all groups to move into productive and rewarding jobs and a number of policy recommendations that could improve the situation.

This report on Korea is the fourth country study published in this series. It has a special focus on low-income jobseekers and low-income workers and policies geared towards closing the considerable gaps these groups are facing around income and employment support. The report was prepared by Hyeongso Ha, Christopher Prinz (project leader) and Marko Stermšek, economists in OECD's Skills and Employability Division. Statistical assistance was provided by Sylvie Cimper and Agnès Puymoyen and editorial assistance by Lucy Hulett and Katerina Kodlova. Comments were provided by Mark Keese, Veerle Miranda, Mark Pearson and Stefano Scarpetta. The report benefited greatly from discussions with experts and government officials during an OECD mission to Korea in late 2016, and comments on a draft version provided by several Korean ministries and stakeholders.



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