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SOCIAL AGENDA

n°56



Inside

14-23

THE NEW EUROPEAN LABOUR AUTHORITY

*and how the other four
EU agencies in the
employment and social
policy area are evolving*

Facilitating cross-border labour mobility



Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion come under the remit of European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen.

The website of Commissioner Thyssen: ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/thyssen_en

The home page of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion: ec.europa.eu/social

The website of the European Social Fund: ec.europa.eu/esf

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Welcome to n°56



Joost Korte
Director General of the European
Commission's Employment,
Social Affairs and Inclusion
Directorate General

In less than a year, a European Labour Authority has been created. It will facilitate access to information and services relating to cross-border mobility, and enhance cooperation between the bodies of the Member States that are in charge of implementing and enforcing EU legislation in this area.

Responsible for the actual establishment of the Authority and for its initial operation, the European Commission has been keeping up the momentum. The Authority was inaugurated in October 2019, less than three months after the adoption of the relevant regulation. Its management board met for the first time on this occasion.

The Board adopted its work programme and budget for 2019, and discussed the priorities for 2020, in particular informing citizens and coordinating concerted and joint cross-border labour inspections.

The Authority's fast growing staff is expected to reach a total of around 140 people, including National Liaison Officers seconded by EU countries. In the course of 2020, the Authority will recruit its Executive Director and move from Brussels to its own premises in Bratislava.

The EU sets rules on rights and obligations relating to cross-border mobility but it is the national authorities that are responsible for enforcing them.

This requires strong administrative and operational cooperation between countries. While citizens and employers need to know where to find the right information.

Reinforcing the social dimension

Labour mobility across Europe is a growing phenomenon: over 17 million citizens live and work in another EU country – twice as many as a decade ago.

This right is particularly cherished by EU citizens. They say this in opinion polls but also by voting with their feet: more than one million extra EU citizens use it every year.

The Authority will make it easier for them to know and exercise their rights. At the same time, it will help Member States ensure compliance with the rules and fight abuses together and more effectively.

Created by the outgoing European Commission in record time, the European Labour Authority will play a key role in reinforcing in a tangible way the social dimension of the EU, as called for by President-elect Ursula von der Leyen.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Logo unveiled: European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and Slovak Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini inaugurating the European Labour Authority.

European Labour Authority: launched

16 OCTOBER 2019

The European Labour Authority (ELA) started its activities with an inaugural ceremony and the first meeting of its management board. The EU has developed a substantial body of legislation regulating different aspects of cross-border labour mobility. ELA will facilitate access to information and services to citizens and business about their rights and obligations, and cooperation between Member States in the enforcement of Union law, including by facilitating concerted and joint inspections, tackling undeclared work and helping bring about solutions in cases of cross-border disputes (see pages 3 and 14).

Vocational skills: for all and for life

14 OCTOBER 2019

The 2019 European Vocational Skills Week took place in Helsinki from 14 to 18 October. The central theme this year was 'Vocational Education and Training for All – Skills for Life'. In addition, more than 1 000 activities and events took place throughout 2019 at local, regional and national level across the EU and beyond. All stakeholders came together to highlight the benefits of vocational education and training, showcase opportunities and promote an educational pathway that has the potential to transform the lives of young and old alike (see page 12).



Skills for life and for all: Finnish Minister of Education L. Andersson (L) and Commissioner M. Thyssen at the European Vocational Skills Week event in Helsinki.

Sustainability: fair climate-neutral growth

4 OCTOBER 2019

The European Commission published the 2019 edition of its Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review, dedicated this year to sustainability. It sets out a number of policy options to preserve the EU's competitiveness, sustain growth and spread its benefits to the entire EU population and future generations, while pursuing an ambitious transition to a climate-neutral economy (see pages 10 and 28).



Panels for first ever solar road: preserving the EU's competitiveness and sustaining growth, for all, while transitioning to a climate-neutral economy.

Nicolas Schmit: parliamentary success

1 OCTOBER 2019

Jobs European Commissioner-elect Nicolas Schmit faced the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs committee successfully on 1 October 2019. He had received his mission letter from European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen on 10 September (see page 6).



Nicolas Schmit: European Commissioner-elect for Jobs and Social Rights.

Innovation: the aftermath of projects

30 SEPTEMBER 2019

Over 150 project beneficiaries, programme managers from both the European Commission and the EU Member States, as well as other key players, got together in Brussels to talk about the sustainability of the projects financed under the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme. They looked ahead on how the future European Social Fund Plus could help upscaling and mainstreaming the results of EaSI projects.



Second chance school: How to upscale and mainstream the results of EU social innovation projects, which pay particular attention to vulnerable groups.

ILO centenary: the future of work

21 JUNE 2019

The Centenary Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted a declaration for the future of work plus a recommendation against violence and harassment in the world of work. The Declaration sets orientations for a human-centred approach to the future of work, with international initiatives and cooperation for a just transition to an environmentally sustainable future of work, promoting skills, supporting transitions throughout working lives, implementing a transformative agenda to achieve gender equality at work, treating safe and healthy working conditions as a fundamental principle and right at work. As well as providing universal access to social protection, adequate minimum wage and other labour protection to all workers.



Centenary demonstration: members of trade unions from over 15 countries demonstrate in Geneva during the International Labour Organization's conference marking its hundredth anniversary.

2019-2024

Reinforcing the social dimension

Jobs and Social Rights European Commissioner-elect Nicolas Schmit faced the relevant European Parliament committee successfully on 1 October 2019

Dignity, fairness and prosperity: such are the values that President-elect of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, highlighted in her mission letter to Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner-elect for Jobs and Social Rights, on 10 September 2019.

These values are at the heart of the overall objective of “strengthening Europe’s social dimension and ensuring that those in work are supported to earn a living and those out of work are supported to find a job and gain the skills they need”.

Implementing the Pillar

In practice, strengthening Europe’s social dimension entails drawing up an action plan for further implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, which the Commission adopted

and proclaimed together with the European Parliament and EU Member States in 2017.

It is also about adopting an EU framework for ensuring a fair minimum wage, improving labour conditions for platform workers, designing a European unemployment benefit reinsurance scheme and developing a well-functioning European Labour Authority (see page 14).

And it entails promoting social dialogue, making the most out of the future European Social Fund+ (ESF+), strengthening the social protection systems through the European Semester process of economic and social policy coordination, reinforcing the European Youth Guarantee, developing a European Child



Child Guarantee: The new European Commission will reinforce the Youth Guarantee and develop a European Child Guarantee.



Nicolas Schmit: "The strength of the European model is to reconcile economic and social issues and to fully incorporate the environmental dimension".

Guarantee and further implementing and developing the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

Environmental dimension

"The strength of the European model is to reconcile economic and social issues and to fully incorporate the environmental dimension", Nicolas Schmit stated when he addressed the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee for his hearing as Commissioner-elect, on 1 October.

His two main goals will be to boost employment and promote a well-skilled workforce, responsive to the digital and climate transition, and to put social rights for all and social inclusion at the centre of his priorities.

"I will promote a European labour market that guarantees access and good opportunities for everybody and in particular for persons with disabilities, migrants, Roma communities and the most deprived", he said.

In addition to drawing up an action plan implementing the Pillar, he will do his utmost to fight poverty and in particular "to break the poverty cycle affecting children and to improve the support to youth. I will work to promote a fairer Europe. In a sustainable economy, social rights have a central place", he stated.

He will present a legal instrument to ensure that every worker in the EU has a fair minimum wage: "It is not about setting one single EU wage level and I will pay particular attention to the social models of the different Member States".

European Child Guarantee

He will reinforce the Youth Guarantee and lead the work to develop a European Child Guarantee. He will also make sure

that the directives on work-life balance and on predictable and transparent working conditions, adopted in 2019, are fully implemented.

The Commissioner-elect called for "a new reflection on occupational health and safety", an area that he considers "an absolute priority". "We have to look at the new forms of health dangers (...) the more psychosocial ones [such as] stress, burn out and musculoskeletal diseases. It has to be first of all a question of awareness".

After the adoption of the Accessibility Act in March 2019, "our employment policies have to be much more focused on what we call vulnerable populations (...) We have to make sure that disabled persons can indeed get exactly the same opportunities and chances on the labour market and there we have to dedicate more means and resources – also from the ESF – into policies which include all categories of persons who have greater difficulties on the labour market, and disabled persons are one of them".

"I am a big fan of social economy", Nicolas Schmit pointed out. "I have been a minister of social economy (see box). I really believe in the important role social economy [plays] already now. And certainly there is still more potential to develop [it], especially given the challenges we have – environmental, social, poverty, exclusion: all these issues can be well tackled, sometimes better (...) if we have a strong social economy".

Free movement

"'Commissioner for Jobs' also means 'Commissioner for free movement of workers'", the Commissioner-elect insisted. "We should resist any attempt to limit the opportunity for EU citizens to move freely within the EU. We should rather tackle the underlying issues.



Precariousness: addressing the labour conditions of platform workers and new forms of precariousness, and ensuring trust in the digital future.

An employment and social affairs specialist

From 2009 to 2018, Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner-elect for Jobs and Social Rights, was the Luxembourgish Labour and Employment Minister.

Moreover, from 2013 to 2018, his portfolio included Social and Solidarity Economy. And from 2009 to 2013, it included immigration, a portfolio he kept after having been Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Immigration from 2004 to 2009.

Nicolas Schmit was involved in the negotiations leading to three EU treaties: he was an alternate member of the European convention for a European Constitution from 2001 to 2003; personal representative of the Luxembourg Prime minister to the intergovernmental conference leading to the Nice Treaty in 2000; and the person in charge of the intergovernmental conference leading to the Maastricht Treaty at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg from 1990 to 1991.

He was also Permanent representative (Ambassador) of Luxembourg to the EU from 1998 to 2004.

After having studied politics, French literature and international economics, Nicolas Schmit worked as an official in various economic and foreign affairs departments.

Here, the newly-created European Labour Authority can play an important role, ensuring cooperation between national authorities, namely carrying out joint inspections”.

In the skills area, he said he will “explore the idea of individual learning accounts for people of working age”, adding that “it is crucial to ensure trust in the digital future. There, we need to address the labour conditions of platform workers and (...) new forms of precariousness”.

“We need to be ready for future [economic] downturns and ensure that the EU is prepared to react in a socially responsible manner to future shocks (...) A future European unemployment benefit re-insurance scheme requires careful design to ensure rapid responses to shocks while preserving adequate unemployment protection”.

Sustainability

“Social and environmental sustainability are two faces of the same coin. Decent work, quality education, reduced poverty and inequality need to be at the centre of a European Semester that is refocused on the [UN] Sustainable Development Goals”.

“Our international actions need to support a decent work agenda for all. I will work with my colleagues to ensure that international labour standards are put at the core of our trade agreements and in our multilateral work”.

“Investment in people needs to be recognised as investment in a better future. The ESF+ is the EU’s prime instrument. It is a tool to support the implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights by providing resources”.

“The transition towards a carbon neutral economy will not be social by default. We have to ensure nobody, no region, no country



At all levels: the EU's social dialogue can only work when built on strong, autonomous national social partners.

is left behind. To achieve this objective, the ESF+, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, Invest EU and a new Just Transition fund need to be robust enough”.

“Social dialogue should be promoted at all levels, as the EU's social dialogue can only work when built on strong, autonomous national social partners. Likewise, collective bargaining should also be supported, as it constitutes an important feature of our social market economy. As Commissioner, I will fully engage in a dialogue, both with the European Parliament and the Council, but also with national parliaments and national social partners”.

“More than ever, facts need to drive our discussion. My work will

be based on thorough analysis and impact assessment of our initiatives, drawing on inspiration also beyond the EU, from our partners in the G7 and the G20, and working with international organisations like the International Labour Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development”.

Guidance

Commissioner-elect Schmit is due to act in the framework of the political guidelines set out by President von der Leyen (see box) together with Executive Vice-president-elect Valdis Dombrovskis, in charge of “an economy that works for people”, who is also responsible for the commissioners handling economic and financial affairs, trade and regional policy.

A “just for all” transition

A “European Green Deal” is the first of the six political guidelines for 2019-2024 presented on 16 July by Ursula von der Leyen, then President-elect of the European Commission.

A few days before, the European Commission had published its Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) annual review, dedicated this year to sustainability (see page 10). Its title, “Sustainable growth for all”, is echoed by a sub-title in the European Green Deal: “We need a just transition for all”.

“We will support the people and regions most affected, through a new Just Transition Fund”, Ursula von der Leyen explained. A European Climate Pact “will bring together regions, local communities, civil society, industry and schools. Together, they will design and commit to a set of pledges to bring about a change in behaviour, from the individual to the largest multinational”.

The other guidelines are entitled: an economy that works for people; a Europe fit for the digital age; promoting our European way of life; a stronger Europe in the world; and a new push for European democracy.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Fair transition to zero-carbon economy

The Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019 analytical review came out just in time for the elaboration of the 2019-2024 EU guidelines, which include a European Green Deal

“For all”: the message is encapsulated in those two short words at the end of the main title of the 2019 Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review – “Sustainable growth for all: choices for the future of social Europe” – published by the European Commission on 4 July 2019 (see also pages 27 and 28).

Twelve days later, European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen presented a European Green Deal, as the first of six political guidelines for the new European Commission 2019-2024 (see page 6).

ESDE 2019 discusses the interplay of synergies and trade-offs between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability, as well as policy options that can preserve the EU's competitiveness and sustain growth for the entire EU population and future generations, while transitioning to a climate-neutral economy.

This transition will not automatically be just. Fairness requires action. Social considerations must be integrated upfront in the design phase

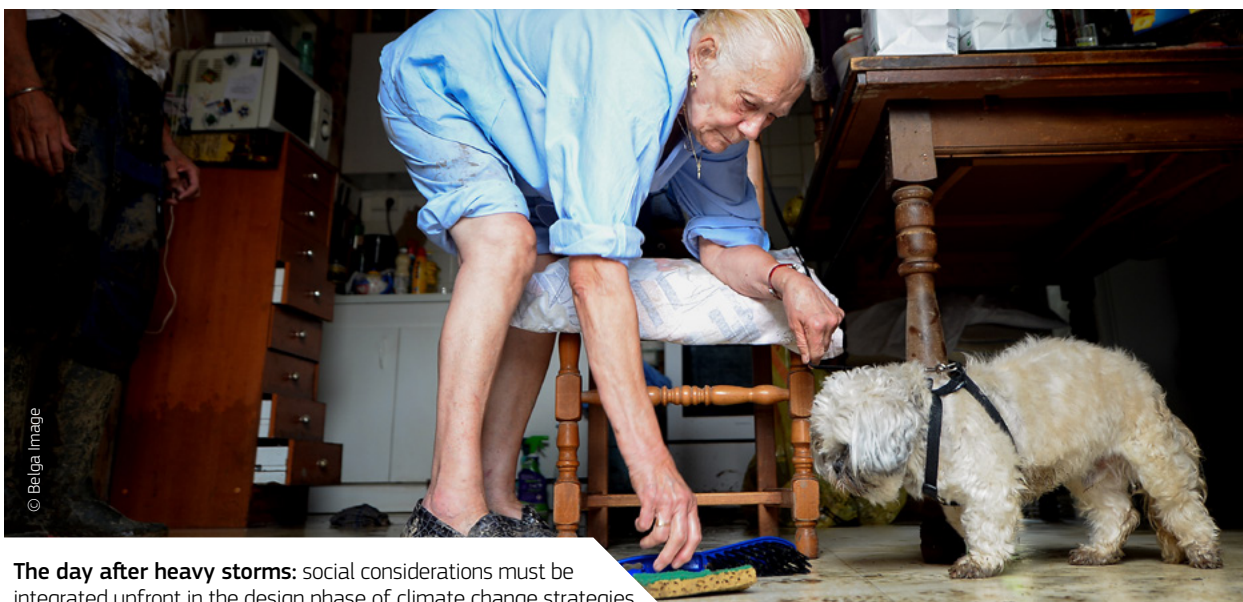
of climate change strategies, such as the European Green Deal.

Challenges

ESDE 2019 starts by reviewing the concept of sustainability (see box), which emerged in the second half of the 20th century: the EU actually led the way by raising the sustainability issue in international fora, as something requiring urgent and coordinated action for global policy.

In the UN context, this led to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While the EU enshrined the concerns related to the social dimension of sustainability in the European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in 2017.

ESDE confirms the continued expansion of the EU's economy, all-time records for high employment and low unemployment, as well as an improving social situation with the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion continuing to fall below pre-2008 crisis levels.



The day after heavy storms: social considerations must be integrated upfront in the design phase of climate change strategies.



Learning new skills: investment in human capital enhances economic sustainability by supporting firms' competitiveness and ultimately wages.

Nonetheless, several megatrends are challenging the sustainability of these achievements and of the EU's social and economic model: population ageing, globalisation, technological transformation, geopolitical uncertainties and climate change.

Convergence between the Member States, and within each of them, is key to ensuring sustainability in the EU.

Social dimension

Integrating the social dimension from the outset – as opposed to addressing it through ex-post remedial action – is of key importance. The fairer the transition to a carbon-neutral economy, the more the EU citizens stand to benefit from it and the smoother the acceptance and implementation of climate-friendly policies.

Fairness can be achieved through social investment that enables citizens to be active in the labour market and acquire new skills, and that provides support during critical life course transitions. Investment in "human capital" also enhances economic sustainability, by supporting firms' competitiveness and, ultimately, wages.

Social investment is at its best in a life-cycle approach, starting with childcare and early childhood education: it then supports mothers' labour market participation and employment, while fostering cognitive skills and equal opportunities early on in children's lives.

The social dimension can also be secured by measures that facilitate access to energy efficient, affordable and adequate housing.

Extra jobs

Trade union and employer organisations should accelerate their efforts to manage the transition, despite differences due to the uneven impact of this transition on different sectors of the economy.

If well managed, the transition to a zero-carbon economy will increase the number of jobs available and have a positive impact on labour market structure, job distributions and skills needed.

By 2030, the transition is expected to create an additional 1.2

million jobs in the EU, on top of the 12 million new jobs already expected in a no-policy-intervention scenario.

Job quality will also benefit from the transition, which is expected to mitigate the ongoing job polarisation resulting from automation and digitalisation. It will create jobs in the middle of the wage and skills distributions, particularly in construction and manufacturing.

More information: <https://europa.eu/lqb97Xj>

Four components

Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019 highlights four main components of sustainable development, which reinforce each other and are highly relevant from a policy viewpoint:

1. Creating a virtuous circle by promoting productivity and efficiency through policies focusing on "human capital" (skills and social welfare in general) and institutions (well-functioning collective bargaining and trust in the work of government institutions).
2. Labour market efficiency, as a precondition for sustainable development. By contrast, structural weaknesses in product and labour markets undermine competitiveness, wage increases and employment prospects. In this respect, inclusive labour markets offering equal opportunities and rewards are key.
3. Favourable social conditions and efficiency of the welfare state in lowering poverty rates and inequality.
4. Fighting limitations to growth, such as high labour taxes and limited investment in the workforce.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

European Skills Week

opens up new venues

The 2019 edition of European Vocational Skills Week focused on learning at any age, with a strong international dimension, further boosting the vocational education and training community at all levels

"It's all about skills, skills and skills!", European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen hammered in an interview with *Social Agenda* just before the 2019 European elections. "It's the essence of our social market economy" and this is why "we have put skills on top of the European Pillar of Social Rights [adopted in 2017, the European Pillar enshrines 20 principles and rights for fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems in the twenty-first century]."

In October 2019, Marianne Thyssen took part for the last time as Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, in the European Vocational Education and Training (VET) Skills Week, in Helsinki.

Forty European events – conferences, workshops, exhibitions, citizens' dialogues, awards – took place in the Finnish capital from 14 to 18 October, attended by over 1 000 people. But the Week also served as a label that federated hundreds of grass-root initiatives that occurred all year round, right across Europe (see box).

This year, in parallel to the European events in Helsinki, the local VET community in Finland joined the Week, strengthening the connection between the EU and national level initiatives.

For all and for life

The 2019 Week's specific theme was "VET for All-Skills for Life": VET is a great option for anyone, at any stage of one's life. For example, apprenticeship can also be for adults, as is the case with the Finnair airline staff.

Finland, which holds the Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers until the end of 2019, is renowned for both its lifelong learning and its VET system. The latter has recently been reformed, to make it easier to combine workplace learning and school education.

Each person is entitled to individualised learning plans, which can be followed at any moment of the year, and at any time of the day. This is particularly relevant for adult upskilling and reskilling, as it provides them with flexible opportunities to engage in training when it best fits their family and work schedules.

International dimension

In Helsinki, the 2019 Week also focused on the international dimension of VET. For a long time, the European Commission has been cooperating in this area with UNESCO, ILO, OECD and various development agencies of European countries.



Excellence: helping centres of vocational excellence build up or connect to local skills ecosystems and converge upwards through transnational platforms.



Apprenticeship for adults too: Skills Week 2019 emphasised that vocational education and training is a great option for anyone, at any stage of life.

Under the EU's 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (still to be adopted by the EU at the time of publication), the international (beyond EU) dimension of the Erasmus programme will be opened for the first time to VET. This requires building or reinforcing partnerships with countries in other parts of the world. The international dimension is also about embedding the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals into European policy for VET.

Innovation and growth

When discussing innovation, reference is often made to the "knowledge triangle" – the link between businesses, education and research. VET has an important role to play in this triangle, as well as in "smart specialisation" strategies that lead to sustainable growth, innovation, job creation and social cohesion.

With this in mind, the European Commission has launched an initiative on centres of vocational excellence to help them build up or connect to local skills ecosystems, and support upward convergence through transnational platforms. A recent mapping of centres of vocational excellence across Europe and beyond has just been completed and a first set of pilot projects funded under Erasmus + have begun their activities.

A new Erasmus + call for fully-fledged pilots was published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture EU Executive Agency, with a 20 February deadline for applications.

The German Presidency of the EU Council has committed to hosting the 2020 European Vocational Skills Week in Berlin, from 9-13 November, with digitalisation and sustainability as core topics.

More information:

<https://europa.eu/DR74tg>

Birth of a community

"My favourite event", is how Marianne Thyssen, outgoing Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility European Commissioner, described the European VET Skills Week when she closed the 2019 edition of the central European event on 18 October 2019, in Helsinki.

She had one goal in mind when she created the Week back in 2016: "To show that vocational education and training really is a first choice and the path to an interesting job, a good income and a great career".

"Of course, we already knew that VET is a first choice", she added. "But we also had to tell Europe. And from this year, the world! That's why we organised VET Skills Week".

Another aim of the Week was to build a strong VET community, bringing together policy makers, social partners, VET providers, businesses, civil society and the learners themselves.

By 4 November 2019, 1 573 local, regional or national European Vocational Skills Weeks-labelled events had taken place in 2019 across Europe, involving more than 2.6 million participants: open days, career fairs, exhibitions or activities such as interviews, articles, webinars or small-scale training sessions.

SPECIAL FEATURE



ELA — Facilitating cross-border labour mobility

© Belga Image

Inspection on a construction site: one of the objectives of ELA is to facilitate joint inspections and mediate in cases of disputes between EU countries.

A European Labour Authority (ELA) has been established to better address today's cross-border mobility challenges

Assisting Member States and the European Commission in their effective application and enforcement of EU law related to labour mobility, and in the coordination of social security systems, across the EU: this is what the regulation creating the European Labour Authority (ELA) states. The regulation entered into force on 31 July 2019.

It goes on to state that ELA should also “aim in all its activities at ensuring cooperation, avoiding overlaps, promoting synergies and complementarity with other decentralised EU agencies and specialised bodies”.

Amongst these agencies, this special feature will focus on those relating to employment and social policy, of which there are now five as, indeed, ELA has the status of an EU decentralised agency.

Executive role

The first of four objectives listed in the regulation creating ELA is to facilitate people and companies' access to information on rights and obligations regarding labour mobility across the EU single market (which also includes Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland), as well as to relevant services (notably EURES,

the European job mobility portal).

The regulation lists three other objectives, that show that ELA has very much of an operational role: they have to do with enhancing cooperation between EU Member States in enforcing relevant EU laws across the Union. This includes facilitating concerted and joint inspections, mediating in cases of cross-border disputes between EU countries and tackling undeclared work.

ELA will also carry out analyses and risk assessment on issues of cross-border labour mobility, and support Member States with capacity building.

The Authority's remit includes social security coordination, free movement of workers, the posting of workers, and highly mobile services – notably sector specific rules in the area of international transport.

Moreover, it will support cooperation on tackling undeclared work and other situations that put at risk the proper functioning of the internal market, such as letterbox entities and bogus self-employment.

Contact established

In July 2019, ELA launched its website, with a functional mailbox. It also started recruiting staff.

Its first tasks have to do with both logistics and substance: getting its premises ready in Bratislava and preparing the meetings of ELA's Management Board.

The board met for the first time in October. It is made up of representatives from each Member State, the European Commission, EU-level social partners, an independent expert appointed by the European Parliament, and observers from Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland as well as from the employment-related EU agencies. A Stakeholder Group including EU-level social partners provides further expertise and has an advisory role for the Management Board.

The board discussed the setting up of the Authority, including the adoption of the first ELA budget. At the time of publication, the ELA Management Board was due to meet again, in December, to decide on its work programme for 2020.

Information and cooperation

One of the key tasks of ELA is that of improving, for the public at large, the availability of information on labour mobility, about people's rights and obligations when embarking on cross-border activities.

Another is to effectively enhance cooperation practices between Member States, including between their labour inspectorates.

In the course of 2020, the Member States will second National Liaison Officers (one per country) to the Authority. In charge of liaising with their respective national authorities back home, they will all be working together as a team, under one roof.

ELA is expected to reach its full operational capacity by 2024 (see also page 3).

More information:

<https://ela.europa.eu/index.html>

Operational support

Designed to facilitate the implementation of EU labour mobility legislation, the European Labour Authority (ELA) provides national authorities with operational and technical support to exchange information, develop day-to-day cooperation routines, carry out inspections and, if necessary, settle disputes.

It ensures synergies with existing agencies and integrates a number of existing committees and networks, thereby simplifying cooperation amongst EU countries.

By the time it reaches cruising speed, ELA should consist of approximately 140 staff members, some of them seconded from EU Member States as National Liaison Officers. It will have an annual budget of approximately €50 million.

ELA in practice

Authorities in Member State A identify a suspected case of fraud in the area of posting by a company in Member State B. This company does not only send posted workers to Member State A, but also to Member State C.

The three countries decide to launch a joint inspection and ask the Authority to help.

Based on agreed routines, the European Labour Authority provides logistical and technical support to the joint inspection, including translation and interpretation services, helping to uncover any irregular activities of the company in all three countries.



Inauguration: The European Labour Authority's logo was officially unveiled in October 2019, after the law creating ELA came into force on 31 July.

SPECIAL FEATURE



Eurofound – Improving how we **live and work** today and tomorrow

© Belga Image

Cross-cutting issue: Eurofound's remit has been officially widened to include the opportunities and challenges provided by digitalisation.

The European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions (Eurofound) is tackling new strategic areas

Carrying out research and shaping its findings in a way that responds to the policy concerns at hand: this has been Eurofound's task for the last forty-four years in the area of labour market change, working conditions and sustainable work, industrial relations, quality of life and public services.

Recently, its remit has been widened to include two crosscutting areas: digitalisation (the opportunities and challenges it represents for work and employment) and convergence (between and within EU Member States).

European Pillar

The extension of Eurofound's scope corresponds with the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU proclaimed in November 2017.

The Pillar upholds a very comprehensive and forward-looking vision of employment and social affairs policy. It also plays

an important role in framing EU-level economic and social governance, known as the European Semester process.

And it inspires EU employment and social affairs policymaking – as illustrated by the latest wave of initiatives on work-life balance, fair cross-border mobility, transparent and predictable working conditions and access to social protection for all forms of employment (see *Social Agenda* n°55).

Support for policymakers

On many of these issues, Eurofound played a key role in providing knowledge and support for policymakers, based on the evidence it has accumulated through its EU-wide research and analysis (see box).

Take work-life balance: Eurofound showed that three million people had left full-time employment because of the lack of facilities for childcare or care for dependent family members. And that the lack of paid paternity and parental leave, as well

as the transferability of parental leave in many EU countries, contributed to the low take-up of such leave by fathers (despite expressing a higher preference to reduce their working time during the parenting years).

Or take early childhood - a priority of the new European Commission. Eurofound produced evidence confirming two important assumptions: that the lack of availability, accessibility and affordability is one of the main barriers to the use of these childcare services; and that the work of early childhood education and care professionals has a long-lasting impact on children's lives.

Youth employment

Well before 2017, Eurofound's policy-centred research proved crucial in convincing the EU countries to invest in the fight against youth unemployment, as a matter of urgency. This it did in the aftermath of the 2008 financial and economic crisis, when public budgets were under strain across the EU.

As a result, the Youth Guarantee was launched in 2012, together with a Youth Employment Initiative focusing on young people neither in employment, education nor training (NEETs) - a category that had not previously been given priority attention.

To bring the point home, Eurofound estimated how much the EU economy would lose if it did not integrate the NEETs, not to mention the societal and political impact a lost generation would have in terms of trust and cohesion.

Eurofound also provided follow-up by contributing to the evaluation of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative. This led the EU to sustain its efforts in favour of youth employment.

Moreover, Eurofound focused a lot of effort on assessing the possible future of work, identifying the emerging forms of employment that are often taken up by young people, such as platform work. It categorized them according to their implications for working conditions and the labour market.

Reaching out

Eurofound is governed by a tripartite management board made up of representatives of the governments and the social partners in the EU countries, representatives of the European Commission and one independent expert appointed by the European Parliament.

In February 2019, a new Eurofound founding Regulation came into force that refers explicitly to the national level of governance.

Indeed, Member States' governments and social partners are key to implementing the European Semester recommendations, agreed at EU level, and the employment and social affairs initiatives stemming from the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Policy-centred

Located in Dublin, Ireland, with a small base in Brussels, Belgium, Eurofound was established in 1975.

Its main mission is to provide knowledge to assist in the development of better social, employment and work-related policies.

It is also to contribute to the analytical and policy work of the European Commission, other EU institutions, Member States and social partners' organisations, and of the EU as a whole.

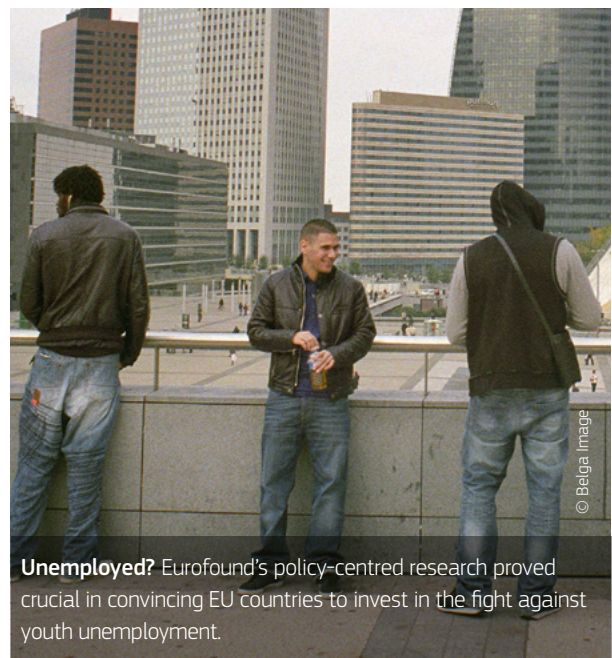
Eurofound has produced three regularly repeated surveys covering all EU Member States and a range of other countries, depending on the survey: the European Working Conditions Survey, the European Quality of Life Survey and the European Company Survey.

It also manages a network of European correspondents covering the EU countries, plus Norway. It collects a wide range of comparable information on national-level realities and developments.

In 2018, Eurofound had around 100 staff members and an annual budget of about €20 million.

More information:

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/>



Unemployed? Eurofound's policy-centred research proved crucial in convincing EU countries to invest in the fight against youth unemployment.

SPECIAL FEATURE

EU-OSHA – Helping make workplaces safer, healthier and more productive

The EU's information agency for occupational safety and health (EU-OSHA) celebrated its 25th anniversary in June 2019

Historically, occupational safety and health (OSH) was at the heart of the European project right from the start, in 1951, with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community.

As far as the EU as we know it today is concerned, a major milestone was the adoption of the OSH Framework Directive in 1989. It laid down common principles, put risk assessment at the centre of OSH management and gave rise to 24 specific directives.

In the early 1990s, there were over 4 million workplace accidents every year in Europe, of which 8 000 were fatal. In response to these shocking figures, the European Commission declared 1992 the European Year of Safety and Health at Work. This set the scene for the founding of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) in 1994.

An information agency

Located in Bilbao, Spain, EU-OSHA was established in 1994.

Its main mission is to develop, gather and provide reliable and relevant information, analysis and tools to advance knowledge, raise awareness and exchange occupational safety and health (OSH) information and good practice.

The agency collects and disseminates information on OSH at EU and national level. It also anticipates change and new and emerging risks, and develops tools for good OSH management.

In 2018, it employed 64 staff and had an annual budget of €15.4 million.

Campaigns

Raising awareness of the risks workers face, and how to prevent them, is central to EU-OSHA's mission. Over the past 25 years, the Agency and its partners have reached out to target audiences through the Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, the European Week for Safety and Health at Work and many other awareness-raising activities.

In 2008, EU-OSHA began running 2-year Healthy Workplaces campaigns, its flagship awareness-raising activity and the largest campaigns of their kind in the world.

The aim here is to raise awareness of an important OSH-related issue and providing resources in 25 languages to manage workplace risks such as stress and psychosocial risks and



Stress: EU-OSHA's foresight activity aims to understand the new and emerging risks that changes such as digitalisation may mean for occupational safety and health.



Musculoskeletal disorder: “Lighten the load”, EU OSHA’s Healthy Workplace campaign 2020-2022, focuses on work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

dangerous substances, or promoting safe maintenance, risk prevention and a sustainable working life.

The upcoming campaign, Lighten the Load (2020-2022), will be the first one to follow a three-year cycle. It will focus on work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

Good practice exchange is also a key element of the campaigns. The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards highlight examples of innovative and sustainable approaches to OSH in relation to each campaign’s theme.

Foresight

EU-OSHA also produces the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), which investigates how OSH risks are managed, in practice, in workplaces across Europe.

The first results of its third edition were due to be published at the end of 2019. Its fieldwork covers over 40 000 establishments across all business size classes and activity sectors in 33 European countries.

EU-OSHA’s Foresight activity aims to provide policy-makers and researchers with the information they need to anticipate trends in the rapidly changing world of work.

It also aims to understand the new and emerging risks that such change may mean for OSH. Of particular interest is the impact of the digitalisation of the economy on OSH.

Focal points

The success of EU-OSHA’s work depends very much on the commitment of its partners: the national focal points and their tripartite networks, the official campaign partners and the

media partners.

Through its network of focal points, EU-OSHA aims to establish and increase cooperation among Member States on OSH matters, mainly to raise awareness of OSH risks and promote their prevention.

Nominated by each government as EU-OSHA’s official representative in that country, the focal points are typically the competent national authority for safety and health at work. They disseminate the agency’s products and information to national stakeholders and are primary contributors to the implementation of EU-OSHA’s work programmes.

Napo

EU-OSHA also provides a series of online tools for raising awareness and managing OSH risks: OIRA, that simplifies the assessment and management of safety and health risks in the workplace; OSHwiki, a rich source of information on all aspects of OSH; e-guides that provide guidance for OSH management; infographics; the campaign toolkit; data visualisation tools... And of course, the Napo films!

Napo is the animated star of a series of language-free educational films that combine a humorous approach with important messages. The films are created by a consortium of European OSH organisations. The likeable characters and light-hearted approach offer an effective way of engaging people in OSH and raising awareness of risks and how to manage them.

More information:

<https://osha.europa.eu/en>

SPECIAL FEATURE



Recycling solar cells: there is a poor connection between environmental and skills policies in EU countries, a new Cedefop report shows.

Cedefop – Supporting vocational education and training

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is seeing its pioneering work acknowledged and its missions made more explicit

Standing at the interface between education and training, and employment, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is at the heart of an on-going labour market revolution.

Vocational education and training has become crucial in the face of globalisation, digitalisation, technological change, climate change and population ageing. It helps secure a job at all levels of education and ensure transitions between jobs throughout life.

Therefore, it can no longer be seen in isolation: neither from other forms of education; nor from other areas such as employment, economic, social and environment policy.

New mission order

Accordingly, Cedefop's founding regulation was amended. The new version came into force on 20 February 2019.

It widens Cedefop's role from primarily assisting the European Commission to collaborating with it, as well as with the EU Member States and social partners, to support EU policy on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications. Fostering close partnership between governments, employee and employer organisations is crucial in the vocational education and training area.

The new regulation also recognises Cedefop's role in providing knowledge, evidence and services, as well as its work on qualifications and validation, the support it provides to countries in implementing vocational education and training policies or the tools, and the data that it collects.

It complements Cedefop's analyses task with a research one and calls upon it to develop relations with other international organisations and third countries.

Green jobs

In 2019, Cedefop published a report on skills for green jobs that includes country studies on Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France and the United Kingdom. These studies were carried out together with the International Labour Organisation.

The new report shows that there is a poor connection between environmental and skills policies. Regulations, policies and strategies explicitly focusing on green skills and employment are rare and countries vary in their approach to defining, classifying and collecting data on green jobs and skills.

Nevertheless, data collection on developments in the green economy is increasing, and vocational education and training programmes and qualifications are being updated. This reflects an increasing demand for green jobs and skills since 2010.

Skills intelligence

Cedefop provides overviews of skills anticipation and matching in all EU Member States, explaining what types of skills intelligence are available and how they are used.

To supply policy-makers with practical and easily accessible information that can be readily interpreted, the agency launched a web tool called “Matching Skills-Inspiring Policies”.

The web tool showcases a collection of policy instruments from EU Member States, which use information on labour market trends and anticipated skills needs to inform and shape upskilling or other skills-matching policies.

“Matching Skills-Inspiring Policies” is not intended to be a one-way street. Cedefop encourages users to send feedback and share ideas. Suggestions for additional skills-matching policies are welcome and the matching skills platform offers a template for collecting, synthesising and reporting the necessary information.

Big data

In addition to its well-established skills analysis tools – the European Skills Forecast, European Skills Index and European Skills and Jobs Survey – Cedefop has launched a system for gathering and analysing information contained in online job vacancies.

Powered by big data techniques and machine learning, it is based on the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) overarching classification and covers all EU countries. Almost real-time information can support continuing training as part of active labour market measures.

In the future, the ability to understand time trends in skills demands will also support initial education and training, as well as career guidance.

More information:

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

Vocational education and training from all angles

Located in Thessaloniki, Greece, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) was established in 1975. It helps the European Commission, EU countries, employers’ and employees’ organisations shape and implement EU policies on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications.

Cedefop examines how socioeconomic and demographic trends affect employment, the nature of jobs and the demand for skills. It helps focus vocational training provision on labour market needs, by forecasting future skills needs and alerting policymakers to skills mismatches.

The agency supports the use of EU-wide tools such as qualifications frameworks, which enable qualifications from different education systems to be compared and recognised or informal learning to be validated.

It also reviews work-based learning models and provides policy advice to EU governments to help reduce joblessness, early school leaving and other labour market imbalances.

In 2018, Cedefop had around 120 staff and an annual budget of €18 million.



Big data: Cedefop has launched a system for gathering information contained in online job vacancies, powered by big data techniques.

SPECIAL FEATURE

ETF – Promoting education and training outside the EU

The European Training Foundation (ETF) supports the EU's external action

When it was established in 1994, the European Training Foundation (ETF) focused on vocational education and training in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, to support reforms of their education and training systems as part of their path towards joining the European Union.

By the time it celebrated its 25th anniversary, in 2019, the ETF's geographical scope had extended to embrace the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, Turkey, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as cooperation with the African Union.

This broader geographical mandate is underpinned by a new focus on "human capital" development issues, including labour market and employment systems, in a lifelong learning perspective.

Hands-on support

The ideals and principles that have animated the ETF since its inception have remained unchanged: providing high quality, hands-on support to the partner countries in reforming and developing their interface between the worlds of education and work.

The ETF encourages these countries to foster home-grown solutions, rather than transpose ready-made ones. It provides sound evidence

and the widest possible range of experience, research and good practice from Europe and beyond.

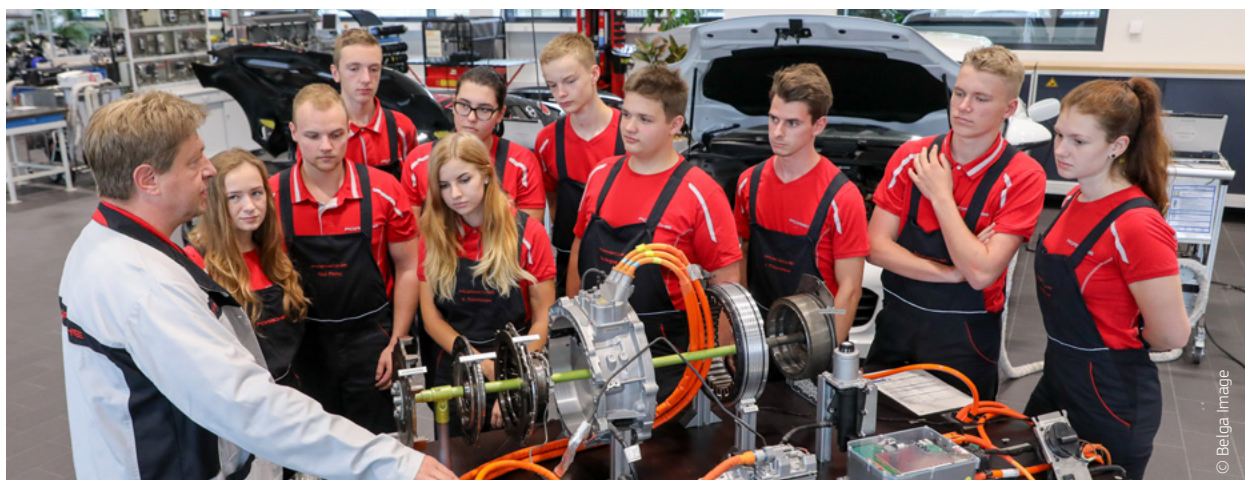
It also brings people together from different spheres of government, business and civil society, so that they may share information and experience and build partnerships for change.

Its close links with the EU institutions and Member States enable the ETF to leverage intra-EU policy developments and external assistance programmes, to the benefit of "human capital" development in its partner countries.

Future of skills

In June 2019, the ETF presented its strategy for the post-2020 period, based on the outcome of consultations carried out in 2018 on the future of work - and in particular the future of skills.

This entailed exploring how global trends in technology but also globalisation, migration and climate change, affect the EU and its partner countries. All this work came to a head in November 2018, when the ETF organised a conference on "Skills for the Future: Managing Transition", in Turin. The ETF has been continuing this work, looking in particular at innovation in traditional sectors such as tourism, agriculture and manufacturing.



Entrepreneurial learning: the ETF was invited by the Georgian government to organise a workshop on entrepreneurial learning in the digital age.



Vocational technical high school in Turkey: the ETF covers Turkey, the Balkans, the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The agency is also helping countries develop information systems, to track skills needs and training provided by different systems. This includes career guidance and counselling: helping people of all ages find the right training and jobs that match their skills, as well as developing new approaches to big data analysis to support decision-making.

Operating in a development context, the ETF cooperates very closely with other donors involved in “human capital” development: non-governmental organisations such as national aid agencies from other European countries; as well as international financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Support to Georgia

The work of the ETF is closely connected to the programmes and projects of the European Commission and of the EU Delegations in third-countries, including support to policy dialogue with partner countries.

For example, the ETF supports the EU's action in Georgia. It assists this country with the drafting of new vocational education and training laws. It is also helping Georgia revise and update its qualifications framework and advising stakeholders on how to implement concept and strategic plans more effectively.

The Georgian economy is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The ETF is therefore working with government agencies to strengthen their capacity in policy implementation and methodologies for entrepreneurial learning and SME skills.

The ETF organised an international workshop on entrepreneurial learning in the digital age. It resulted in a draft vision for developing entrepreneurship as a key competence in Georgia and an initial action plan on how this approach can be systematically applied in education policy and practice.

The next step is to design approaches to turn vocational education and training colleges into entrepreneurial institutions, by working on their learning environment, bringing the world of business and local communities closer to schools and providing career guidance for young people and adults.

More information:

<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en>

External relations and cooperation

Located in Turin, Italy, the European Training Foundation (ETF) started operations in 1994 in the framework of the EU's external relations policy and cooperation instruments. The ETF is the only EU agency funded under the external relations budget of the European Union.

The agency contributes to improving “human capital” development by supporting reforms of education and training systems in its partner countries: the EU Neighbourhood South and East, the countries applying for EU membership – “enlargement countries” – and the countries of Central Asia.

Since 2018, the ETF is also supporting the development of a continental qualifications framework as part of an EU-funded project with the African Union.

The ETF has 129 staff and an annual budget of €20.1 million.

SOCIAL RIGHTS

© Belga Image

Gender equality and healthcare access

How EU-funded projects implement the European Pillar of Social Rights

Gender equality is the second of the 20 principles and rights enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, which supports fair and well functioning labour markets and welfare systems in Europe (see box).

In practice, the EU promotes gender equality by supporting schemes such as *Habiter au Quotidien* (Living on a daily basis), that encourages women in France to enter the construction

industry. Indeed, only 2% of workers in this sector are women, despite efforts made by construction federations and institutions in this country.

Thanks to *Habiter au Quotidien*, eight women are trained over nine months in the skills that are required for working on a construction site. They are supervised by a member of a French trade guild.

Leading the way: the EU supports a scheme encouraging women to enter the construction industry in France, where only 2% of workers in this sector are women.



Mobile healthcare facility: an EU funded project in the South Karelia district of Finland brought medical services directly to rural residents.

The project is funded by the EU via a scheme called 'Women in Construction', which offers training and skills exclusively for women who are interested in a career in the construction sector.

Learning on the job

'I am glad to be able to follow this training', says Sylvie Dehais, a trainee who benefited from *Habiter au Quotidien* in 2018. 'Learning is done on the job, with Roland Negluau, our Companion of Duty, who is not only our teacher but also our mentor'.

'As well as being a rewarding professional experience that gives us skills and know-how, it is a human experience which enables us to regain self-confidence, and discover new skills previously reserved for men'.

The project beneficiaries are put in a position to practice a range of construction skills through practice-based learning, including rendering, decorating, tiling and floor laying in a safe environment.

After five months of learning on a construction site, they undertake a professional work placement. This provides them with further professional experience and helps them become more confident, master professional skills and enhance their employability.

Doorstep services

Healthcare is the sixteenth of the principles and rights of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In Finland, an estimated 40% of people live in predominantly rural areas, one of the highest rates in the EU. While there are many benefits to a rural lifestyle, there are also challenges when it comes to accessing services such as healthcare – particularly for elderly people with limited mobility.

The "Mallu does the rounds" project in the South Karelia district sought to address this issue by bringing medical services directly

to rural residents.

In 2010, a bus was outfitted as a mobile healthcare facility and dedicated nurses toured the region, offering flu vaccines, removing stitches, providing health guidance and monitoring blood pressure.

The bus continued to tour the region in the following years, with services expanding to include dental treatment, issuing prescriptions and visiting schools. Thanks to the bus, elderly and vulnerable patients were able to easily access the healthcare services they needed.

Less appointments

The project also helped to lighten the load for medical professionals at regional health centres, by reducing the number of patients needing appointments with doctors.

"When services are centralised, distances grow", Jukka Kärkkäinen from the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare says. "Mobile services are a very good thing for clients. Clinic buses can bring many tests and procedures closer to residents".

The Mallu bus project covered an area with a least 100 000 potential patients. It was particularly effective when it came to supporting independent living among elderly residents. It helped to maximise the cost-effectiveness of regional healthcare and improve the efficiency of regional health centres.

Data collected from Mallu's daily activities was made available to health authorities to aid the development of their existing service network.

The project received €48 000 in funding through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development from 2011-2013, as part of the EU's support for accessible and affordable healthcare.

OTHER VOICES

Sustainability

is social, environmental
and economic



Liina Carr, ETUC Confederal Secretary: The Green New Deal for Europe must target social inequality as a matter of priority.

While recent Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion actions have heightened the focus on climate change, sustainability is not just about the environment. In calling for climate justice, trade unions demand a far-reaching transformation of the economy, a 'just transition' that protects workers while moving rapidly to cut emissions. Europe will never have a sustainable future if thousands of people are thrown out of work.

The European Trade Union Confederation welcomes European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen's pledge for a 'Green Deal for Europe', but this must integrate all dimensions of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. This Green Deal should have a significant budget and investment plan to meet the climate goals recommended by science, mobilising new, not reallocated, funds. It should prioritise social justice and implementing

the Pillar of Social Rights and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals ought to form the foundation of EU policy.

'Sustainability first' should be the thread unifying all EU actions, and social partners must be closely involved at every stage of policy-making to mitigate the social impact of a much-needed zero-emissions economy. We believe a sustainable economy can create good jobs in many sectors. But it is a mistake to neglect the challenges and dangers. A just transition means governments, unions and employers working together to anticipate and manage change.

Transition challenges vary between regions and sensitive sectors such as mining and the car industry. Subsidies that damage the environment must be phased out, while EU structural and social funding should be redirected to up-skilling and retraining workers and creating green jobs. Trade unions have a key role in preparing and representing workers in transition.

Climate policy should review international trading conditions, promote short and local economic circuits, and not mean relocating production outside Europe. Managing social impacts must be built into the design and implementation of policies in all these areas.

More democracy

Involving and getting the support of workers to move towards a sustainable society requires more democracy at work. Social dialogue and workers' information, consultation and participation rights need to be strengthened at all levels. The EU must take responsibility for promoting and supporting collective bargaining so that trade unions and workers can shape sustainable workplaces and a green economy.

The manufacturing sector is the basis of the European economy and we need to preserve it, through a coherent EU industrial strategy that supports sustainable development. New technologies will play an important part in transforming industry, but workers must have a say in their introduction.

Strong public services and social protection are also key to sustainable development. We have urged the EU to adapt its fiscal rules – especially the stability and growth pact – to allow investment in sustainable infrastructure and social protection.

Member States should carry out impact assessments to ensure the costs of decarbonisation policies are distributed fairly and do not increase social inequalities or penalise the poorest in society, for example through higher energy costs.

The Green New Deal must target social inequality as a priority. We cannot allow the climate emergency to turn into a social emergency.

Liina Carr, Confederal Secretary,
European Trade Union Confederation

INTERVIEW

Taking on climate change

Loukas Stemitsiotis heads the Thematic Analysis unit of the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate General (DG EMPL)



Loukas Stemitsiotis, European Commission: Fairness is the recipe for success, especially in the face of climate change.

In July 2019, your department published the Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review on “Sustainable growth for all” (see page 8). Climate change is at the crossroads of the two areas you have been working in, first economics and now social affairs...

Before joining DG EMPL two years ago, I was dealing mainly with economic, fiscal, and financial and international economic issues. When I came to DG EMPL, I realised that the economy was about people. Over the last few years, there has been an evolution, including within the Economic and Financial affairs (ECFIN) DG of the European Commission and in the International Monetary Fund: they are increasingly delving into the topic of inequality, in which interest rose sharply after the 2008 financial and economic crisis. We should do everything we can to include everybody, not just for the sake of statistics but also for that of citizens at large: the more people participate in the labour market, the more job-rich economic growth there is and the more people across the board benefit from this growth. Two years ago, the ESDE review focused on intergenerational fairness. When presenting it, I highlighted a graph, which showed that the active part of the population would be declining in the coming years, depending on the country: all else being equal, growth would decline too, unless we drastically increase productivity, which is itself conditional upon many factors.

Does this also apply to climate change?

It is a good example: we need to adjust to this new context in a way that is fair and leaves no one behind. The transition to environmental sustainability will not be socially fair automatically: it's up to us to make it social! Fairness is the recipe for success, especially in the face of climate change, and we need to work on this transition to make sure it is a just one.

Is the climate change challenge giving new meaning to your work?

A few years ago, when I was working in the financial markets in London, or when I worked on economic and financial issues in DG ECFIN, I found it difficult to explain my work to my children. Now it is much easier, as these issues are less technical and more related to broader societal matters: climate change concerns everybody! I tell them a lot about what I am doing, and the questions that we are analysing. The coming generation is more sensitive to climate change than we imagine. Some of my colleagues have children younger than mine, who are taking part in the pupils' marches against political inertia in the face of climate change!



Making the transition fair

"Sustainable growth for all: choices for the future of social Europe" is the title of the 2019 annual edition of the Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) review. It discusses policy options for preserving the EU's competitiveness and sustaining growth for the entire EU population and future generations, while transitioning to a climate-neutral economy.

Making this a just transition requires mainstreaming social considerations upfront, in the design phase as well as in the implementation of all policies. Citizens increasingly expect policymakers to accelerate the transition to a socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economy that benefits the well-being of all and leaves nobody behind.

ESDE is the European Commission's flagship analytical report in the area of employment and social affairs (see pages 8, 26 and 27).

Catalogue n°: KE-BD-19-001-EN-N

Link to the publication: <https://europa.eu/FH98PQ>

Homelessness: reversing the trend

Produced by the European Social Policy Network (ESPN), this report shows that preventing and tackling homelessness and housing exclusion remains a key challenge, which can only be effectively addressed by a series of measures: building strategic collaborative frameworks involving all relevant stakeholders; significantly strengthening evidence-based policies; providing adequate funding; and efficiently monitoring and assessing existing measures.

Catalogue n°: KE-02-19-507-EN-N

Link to the publication:
<https://europa.eu/Jn69xt>

Vocational education: mapping excellence

Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) are developing into an important component of EU Vocational Education and Training policy. During late 2018 and early 2019, an exercise was carried out to delineate CoVEs in terms of their main characteristics, with a view to informing the concept and the development of EU support plans. This report presents the findings of this mapping exercise (see page 12).

Catalogue n°: KE-01-19-739-EN-N

Link to the publication:
<https://europa.eu/Ibt37pr>

Migrants: inclusion approaches

Currently, roughly 22.3 million third-country nationals are living in the European Union (4.4% of the total EU population). How do we ensure that migrants and refugees fully participate in economic, cultural and social life? This report looks into the different policies, initiatives and practices related to the inclusion of migrants in European labour markets and societies. It focuses in particular on integrated approaches towards migrants' inclusion and the EU funding available to support it.

Catalogue n°: KE-02-19-483-EN-N

Link to the publication:
<https://europa.eu/fQ86pc>

To download or to order these publications, please go to <https://europa.eu/lbW68yg>

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