

EUROPEAN WORK PROGRAMME 2019 - 2021

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

PERFORMING LABOUR
MARKETS & SOCIAL SYSTEMS

DIGITALISATION

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

SKILLS

STRONG SOCIAL DIALOGUE

WELL-BEING AT WORK

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INTRODUCTION

Social dialogue at all levels is particularly relevant for fair, responsible and effective labour markets.

Social partners are particularly well-placed to accompany the process of transformation of the economy and design balanced measures and solutions that contribute to economic and social progress.

In this context, the sixth autonomous work programme of the European social partners¹ supports the objectives of the 2016 quadri-partite statement on “A New Start for Social Dialogue²” to strengthen social dialogue at European and national levels; to foster the role and influence of national social partners in the European semester; and to step up capacity building support to national social partners, notably through the European Social Fund.

The 2019-2021 Work-Programme addresses the six following priorities:

- 1 DIGITALISATION**
- 2 IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF LABOUR MARKETS AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS**
- 3 SKILLS**
- 4 ADDRESSING PSYCHO-SOCIAL ASPECTS AND RISKS AT WORK**
- 5 CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR A STRONGER SOCIAL DIALOGUE**
- 6 CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The European social partners may decide to tackle other issues than those contained in this work programme and consider other means of actions following European Commission consultations in accordance with articles 154-155 of the Treaty on the European Union.

¹ BusinessEurope, CEEP, SMEUnited and ETUC (and the liaison committee Eurocadres/CEC)

² <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15738&langId=en>

**1**

DIGITALISATION

In the world of work, digitalisation can be an opportunity and a challenge. The whole world, and particularly Europe, is currently facing a fundamental transformation in the world of work. Many aspects of the ongoing digitalisation process are not yet clear or understood.

The European social partners will organise a joint fact-finding seminar where they will explore different experiences relating to issues, such as the acquisition of digital skills, work organisation, including possibilities and modalities of connecting and disconnecting, and working conditions.

They will negotiate an autonomous framework agreement on digitalisation.

INSTRUMENT: Fact-finding seminar and Autonomous Framework Agreement

**2**

IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF LABOUR MARKETS & SOCIAL SYSTEMS

As part of their integrated projects 2016-2018, the European social partners organised, in 2017 and 2018, seminars in Brussels to discuss their involvement in the European semester and economic governance processes.

Following these initiatives, the European social partners will create a dedicated group reporting to the Social Dialogue Committee reflecting on common themes jointly identified, taking into account the challenges highlighted in the semester process for mutual learning purposes. The participation will be limited to 20 representatives on each side, including the possibility to adapt national social partners' representation depending on the themes that will be addressed at each meeting.

In 2019, the two meetings will focus respectively on the issues of 1) how to reduce the number of young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs); and 2) social partner involvement and priorities for effective active labour markets policies.

In 2020, two meetings will focus respectively on 1) demographic challenges and 2) child care (themes to be confirmed by the European social partners).

INSTRUMENT: Dedicated working group



3

SKILLS

A skilled workforce is one of the main assets of the European social and economic model.

Rapid labour market changes such as the industry 4.0 revolution, digitalisation, social, demographic and environmental transitions and global challenges require joint actions on improving education and training systems in a way that fosters innovation and enhances employees' re-skilling and up-skilling. Social dialogue and collective agreements play an important role in the governance of training systems, in creating training opportunities and in improving the relevance and provision of employee training.

In this context the European social partners, building, amongst others, upon their joint work in the framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications, will undertake a project on innovation, skills, provision of and access to training. A fact-finding seminar will be organised in 2019 and a research report will be prepared by end of 2021.

INSTRUMENT: Fact-finding seminar and joint project



4

ADDRESSING PSYCHO-SOCIAL ASPECTS AND RISKS AT WORK

Psycho-social risks are among the most challenging and growing health and safety concerns at work. They impact not only workers (e.g. stress, burnout) but also companies (e.g. staff turnover, absenteeism,) and the society as a whole (e.g. cost of long-term absenteeism, health care expenditure). Factors that can affect psycho-social aspects of health could be linked to work load, work content, working time, working conditions, communication or work organisation and others originating outside the working environment.

Previous joint initiatives have resulted in two autonomous framework agreements – the first on stress at the workplace in 2004 and the second on violence and harassment at work in 2007.

Taking these into account, a seminar will be organised aiming to refine a common understanding to support social partners in companies and sectors, to identify recent developments and main issues in relation with psycho-social risks at work.

INSTRUMENT: Fact-finding seminar in view of reaching joint conclusions and identifying possible further joint actions



CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR A STRONGER SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Capacity building activities remain a priority for the European social partners. They recognise that in order for the European social dialogue to have a positive impact, much needs to be done to strengthen and support social dialogue at all levels.

In line with their commitments in the New Start for Social Dialogue, the European social partners will continue their efforts to better use the European social fund for social partners' capacity building, and support their members, where needed, to achieve better implementation of EU social dialogue outcomes.

A subgroup of the social dialogue committee was set up in 2015 on the basis of two-year mandate to look into the implementation of the outcomes of European social dialogue. Following the positive evaluation of national and European social partners, the sub group will continue its work on the basis of a renewed mandate, looking into both implementation of outcomes and the issue of capacity building.

INSTRUMENT: Subgroup of the Social Dialogue Committee, Integrated Projects on Capacity Building



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Moving towards a circular economy is a key requirement for decarbonising the European economy as well as to ensure EU's prosperity in a world where the competition to access natural resources will become more challenging. Such a shift implies significant changes in the technology used in many industrial processes as well as the uptake of new business models in many sectors. Even though the circular economy is a political priority for the EU (see notably the EU action plan for the circular economy adopted in December 2015), its consequences for the labour market are not well understood.

The European social partners will organise a joint project to analyse the way in which a circular economy contributes to employment growth and/or transformation. A research report will be prepared by end of 2021.

INSTRUMENT: Joint project



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