

EN

ANNEX

2024 annual work programme within the framework of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and in particular its Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand

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Part 1 – General Overview

1. Overall socio-economic and political context¹

The orientations of the work programme for 2024 are set within a socio-economic context marked by the effects of the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequences of the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression by the Russian Federation on Ukraine, the changing EU's demographic landscape as well as inflationary pressure that especially affects people in vulnerable situations. Despite these challenges, the EU economy performed relatively well in 2022. Energy prices stabilised towards the end of 2022 and are decreasing in 2023. Although the outlook has improved for 2024, important risks for the most vulnerable groups remain, primarily due to the persistently high inflation.

In 2022, EU annual inflation reached the highest level ever measured at 9.2%. Compared with 2021, when the annual value was 2.9%², it more than tripled, with particularly strong spikes in energy and food prices. The inflation rate in the EU in March 2023 was 8.3%³ and is expected to decline to 6.7% in 2023, before moderating to 3.1% in 2024 in the euro area.⁴

The purchasing power of Europeans continues to erode, and this puts especially the livelihood and well-being of low-income households at risk. Strong government and EU intervention seems to have helped prevent a significant deterioration in social outcomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and initial price increases.

Employment and labour mobility

The EU labour market remained remarkably resilient and continued to perform strongly in 2022. The employment rate of people aged 20-64 reached a record high of 74.6% (73.1% in 2021), representing an important step towards the Porto objective of 78.0% for 2030.

The unemployment rate was at 6.2%⁵, the lowest ever recorded. Nonetheless, important challenges persist. The youth unemployment rate declined strongly but began to increase in the closing months. It reached 14.5%⁶ in the EU (-2.0 pp) but climbed to 15.0% in December 2022. The share of people aged 15-29 who were neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) decreased in 2022 to 11.7%⁷. The NEET rate remained somewhat higher for women (12.8%) than for men (10.4%). Long-term unemployment remains a particularly important challenge.

In 2022, the gender employment gap (the difference between the employment rate of women and men aged 20-64) did not improve and remained stable, at 10.7 %⁸. The employment rate of women rose to 69.3%, while that of men grew to 80.1%. More progress is therefore needed to meet the objective set in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan to halve the gender employment gap by 2030.

¹ Source: Employment and Social Developments in Europe Review 2023 and Joint Employment report 2023

² Annual inflation more than tripled in the EU in 2022 - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat (europa.eu)

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/16324910/2-19042023-AP-EN.pdf/ff3d6b28-9c8f-41cd-714f-d1fd38af0b15>

⁴ https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-forecast-and-surveys/economic-forecasts/spring-2023-economic-forecast-improved-outlook-amid-persistent-challenges_en#documents,

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/scoreboard>

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/scoreboard>

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/scoreboard>

⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/scoreboard>

Also, people with lower educational attainment face a more difficult position in the labour market than those with higher education levels, with higher unemployment rates, lower employment, and lower participation to adult learning activities. Those attaining lower secondary education or less are about 23 % less likely to participate in the labour market than those with tertiary education.

Employment growth in the EU is expected to slow down in 2023 and 2024, as a consequence of the deceleration in economic growth. However, the labour market is expected to remain solid. In 2023, employment should grow by 0.5% in the EU and grow by 0.6% in the euro area, while in 2024 it should see an uptick of 0.4% and 0.5%.

Population ageing and a shrinking working-age population are expected to exacerbate labour shortages and increase pressure on public budgets. Population ageing is also likely to have a profound impact on investment, productivity and entrepreneurial activity. In addition, demographic change affects the social, territorial, and inter-generational cohesion of our democratic societies as some Member States and regions are more affected than others.

Education and Skills

The EU headline target on skills sets out that at least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year before 2030, to improve employability, boost innovation, ensure social fairness and close the digital skills gap. Following the State of the Union Speech, the co-legislators agreed to have a European Year of Skills. It was launched on 9 May 2023.

Putting a spotlight on the need to re- and upskill the EU's workforce is particularly crucial when industrial, economical and societal structures are changing in response to climate change. Climate change related investments and reforms boost employment in green sectors, while some jobs in traditionally non-green industries are lost.

Education and training remain central to addressing such transitions as well as poverty and social exclusion, both within and outside of work. People with higher levels of education are at lower risk of poverty and social exclusion: in 2022, 10.5% of those with tertiary education were at risk, compared to 34.5% of those with lower education. For in-work poverty, these shares were 4.1% and 18.4%, respectively.

Labour shortages increased dramatically in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2021, they reached or exceeded pre-pandemic levels in several countries. The job vacancy rate soared to 2.9% in 2022, the highest rate ever recorded and remained stable at 2.8% in the first quarter of 2023.

The European Year of Skills emphasises the challenges underpinning labour and skill shortages in the EU. A number of EU initiatives seek to address labour and skill shortages and in particular the Pact for Skills, the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality, and the European Green Deal Industrial Plan.

The Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts, Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability and Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience will help individuals to better access and retain employment through learning and modernise VET systems. Other measures address other root causes of labour shortages, most notably the proposal for a Directive on adequate minimum wages that has the potential to improve pay conditions in some shortage occupations, the European Care Strategy (and to some extent the European Child Guarantee), which aims to improve the supply of affordable care solutions, potentially

stimulating the labour supply of women and the Talent booster mechanism⁹ that supports EU regions affected by the accelerated decline of their working age population.

With the right accompanying measures in place, the green transition could add around 1 million quality jobs in the EU by 2030 and 2 million by 2050, in sectors such as construction, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) or renewable energy, while mitigating the decline in middle skilled jobs as a result of automation and digitalisation. Restructuring and adjustment in companies and ecosystems will require large labour reallocations across sectors and regions.

Upskilling and reskilling are the main priorities to foster an inclusive recovery and support the digital and green transitions. The crisis has highlighted the importance of strengthening in particular digital skills, still not sufficient among a large part of the EU population. Most jobs require these skills and the crisis has proven the importance of adequate digital skills for the continuity of business, education and training activities; it also empowers citizens to access information and services.

Social inclusion and poverty eradication

The EU headline target to reduce by 2030 the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million people, including at least 5 million children, is of a key importance in the view of the current challenges.

The share of people at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) remained stable in 2022. The AROPE rate in the EU stood at 21.6%¹⁰, similar to the two previous years (21.7% in 2021, 21.6% in 2020).

The impact of the pandemic was cushioned thanks to extraordinary government interventions with income-support policies and automatic stabilisers. Nonetheless, households' purchasing power is endangered as prices are on the rise.

The recent increase in energy prices and its distributional impact underlines the significance of enabling access to essential services such as energy and transport for tackling social exclusion and poverty, including energy poverty, access to housing and sustainable ways of transport, with a focus on vulnerable groups and regions.

The purchasing power of Europeans continues to erode, and this puts especially the livelihood and well-being of low-income households at risk. Nominal wage growth remained far below inflation, leading to declines in purchasing power.

In this challenging context, the reported financial distress increased and is particularly high for households on lower incomes (more than one quarter). Overall, reported financial distress increased from 12.5% in December 2021 to 15.8% in December 2022.

Population growth is expected to slow down in the coming years before starting to decline in the longer term. The relative share of the older population (aged 70+) is expected to increase gradually in all countries. This trend continues to pose long-term challenges to pension systems and approaches. Yet, the pension adequacy remained generally stable in 2020, while the gender gap in pensions remains large despite a gradual decrease over the last ten years. Moreover, the risk of poverty or social exclusion remains higher for women than men in the EU.

⁹ Launched by the Harnessing talent communication (COM(2023) 32 final)

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/scoreboard>

The social impacts of the COVID-19 crisis have been unequal among Member States, population groups and age groups. Whereas the socio-economic conditions have generally improved for older people, young people and the working-age population faced deteriorating living conditions in a number of EU countries.

Strengthening access to formal services is important to ensure social fairness and gender equality; it also provides an opportunity for job creation.

The current situation increases the challenges for the social protection systems, specifically in relation to sustainability, ensuring adequate incomes and providing quality services, in particular for those in vulnerable situations.

Against the overall improvements, certain groups like large families, persons with disabilities, people with a migrant background, marginalised communities such as Roma people, as well as non-standard workers remain more exposed to poverty and social exclusion. Significant regional disparities remain (including with EU outermost regions), while joint actions of discretionary measures and automatic stabilisers may have managed to counter the increase in market income inequalities.

The COVID-19 crisis has amplified long-standing housing challenges and pre-existing inequalities in tenure and housing conditions, in particular for those who were already at risk of housing exclusion before. Persons experiencing homelessness were more exposed to health issues and affected by the interruption of service delivery over lockdown periods.

Key priorities for the European Commission

To face these challenges, a key policy priority for the Commission is to ensure a fair and inclusive green and digital transition¹¹. To this end the Commission will continue to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) Action Plan. Therefore, the priorities of the 2024 EaSI work programme continue to support the implementation of the Commission work programmes 2022 and 2023, including the Commission political initiatives in the field of employment and social initiatives that could be supported by EaSI actions, in particular:

- The Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care;
- The Directive on adequate minimum wages;
- The Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income;
- The European Year of Skills;
- The Demography toolbox¹²;
- The Quality Framework for Traineeships;
- The Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions;
- The communication on the further digitalisation of social security coordination¹³;
- The proposal for a Directive establishing a European Disability Card and a European Parking Card for persons with disabilities;
- The proposal for a Directive on improving working conditions in platform work; The continued work on updating the EU rules on hazardous substances to combat cancer, reproductive and respiratory diseases (e.g. lead¹⁴, diisocyanates¹⁵ and asbestos¹⁶);

¹¹ EU Recovery Plan (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-recovery-plan/>), Towards a green, digital and resilient economy: our European Growth Model (European Growth Model (europa.eu))

¹² COM(2023) 577 final

¹³ COM(2023) 501

¹⁴ Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic substances at work (the CMR Directive)

¹⁵ Directive 98/24/EC on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work

¹⁶ Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work

- The proposal for revised Regulations on coordination of social security systems.
- The Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality¹⁷.

2. Overall priorities for the EaSI strand in 2024

The EaSI strand will notably support the above-mentioned initiatives with analytical activities, policy implementation, capacity building, communication and dissemination activities in relation to employment and skills, social protection and inclusion, labour markets and labour mobility and safe and fair working conditions.

The EaSI strand contributes to the Commission’s headline ambitions: “an economy that works for people”, “a Europe fit for the digital age” and “a new push for European democracy”¹⁸. Furthermore, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and its 20 principles provide a compass for building up a strong social Europe and ensure a just transition, especially contributing to the objective “a more social and inclusive EU”. The EPSR Action Plan sets out an extensive policy agenda, to be rolled out by the end of 2024.

In 2024, the EaSI strand will have the following priorities:

1. *Strengthen employment and ensure fair labour mobility as well as safe and fair working conditions:*

1.1. *Employment*

- Support the organization of meetings with relevant stakeholders in view of the adoption of the Platform Work Directive.
- Support the implementation of the Action Plan for the social economy, including analysis of related topics, guidance and support to stakeholders, communication and awareness raising, in particular for the adoption of the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions.
- Support the development of finance markets for micro-, social and impact-driven enterprises, as well as EU-level networks in the area of micro- and social-enterprise finance, notably to increase the number and quality of outreach activities, mutual learning, research activities and input for policy design.
- Support Services for Mutual Learning within the European Employment Strategy, as well as analyses of employment and social developments.
- Monitor and collect data to be used in the framework of the European Semester process and as evidence-based for decision-making.
- Support economic analysis of major trends affecting the social and employment situation Support analysis on flexible retirement patterns and age-friendly social and working environments

Monitor the Employment situation in EU and developments of labour markets and contribute to the Employment aspects in the European Semester.

¹⁷ 2022/C 243/04

¹⁸ Commission work programme (europa.eu)

1.2. Labour markets and labour mobility

- Support fair labour mobility.
- Support public employment services through capacity building, networking and mutual learning.
- Support fair intra-EU labour mobility through the bodies promoting equal treatment and supporting workers.
- Support information sharing, mutual learning, peer reviews in the field of labour mobility.
- Enhanced synergies with other EU-level funds¹⁹ such as the joint financing of the EUROPASS system²⁰, which is a notable example of cooperation between the ESF+ and Erasmus+²¹.

1.3. Safe and fair working conditions

- Analyse legal, regulatory, economic and political aspects of employment and labour markets, including reforms in the Member States, the EEA countries, the candidate countries and the potential candidates.
- Support analysis and legal assessment required in the context of Better Regulation or EU law enforcement (e.g., transposition checks), notably in relation to Directive 2003/88/EC on Working Time.
- Support the revision of the Commission Recommendation on Occupational Diseases, in particular as regards asbestos related diseases.
- Focus on health and safety at work, by promoting effective and equivalent enforcement of EU-OSH directives, supporting the implementation and evaluation activities in the field of health and safety at work, and facilitating cooperation between relevant stakeholders.
- Promote scientific support for evaluation of chemicals at work.
- Continue cooperation with international organisations on analysing risks and setting standards as regards health and safety at work such as the dissemination of information and advice on the potential health hazards of exposure to non-ionising radiation, and the International Programme on Chemical Safety.

2. Foster education and skills

- Support communication and awareness activities on the Quality Framework for Traineeships.
- Provide support to skills policy development and follow up to the European Year of Skills.

¹⁹ The ESF+ seeks to ensure complementarities and synergies with the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps, the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF), as well as with the Horizon Europe Programme and the Digital Europe Programme.

²⁰ Link to the EUROPASS: <https://europa.eu/europass/en>

²¹ The ESF+ and Erasmus+ are active in similar fields, notably helping people gain new skills, upskilling to answer the needs of the industrial sectors, improving digital competences, as well as the quality of education and training.

- Support multilingual classification of European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations (ESCO), and help Europeans to present their skills and achievements in a clear and unified way using Europass².
- Support the development of analytical knowledge (such as studies, data and legal analysis), for the future and new forms of work, and a just transition in relation to labour shortages and skills' needs.
- Support lifelong learning, youth employment and investment in skills.

3. *Help improve social protection and inclusion*

- Support networks of relevant stakeholders in the area of social inclusion, notably to foster outreach activities, mutual learning among members, research activities and input for policy design, as well as continue to further involve civil society in the implementation of the Commission's priorities.
- Support analysis, mutual learning and exchange of information on social protection and social inclusion, including access to affordable housing, adequate and effective social protection, , long term care, minimum income and pensions.
- Collect and analyse data on all aspects of inequalities, including those linked to the green transition, income distribution and poverty, inequality of opportunities and access to essential services.
- Analyse measures addressing child poverty and equal opportunities of children.
- Support Member States' work on social policy reforms, including access to healthcare, long-term care and social services, in particular for groups in vulnerable situations, and support the relevant initiatives (including long term care, minimum income and pensions).
- Support the European Semester process and the just transition aspects of the Energy Union and Climate Action governance towards a socially fair climate transition.
- Support the socio-economic inclusion of Roma, by improving the capacity of local authorities to develop and implement plans and projects.
- Support actions that ease social protection implementation across the EU and help institutions across the EU to exchange information on social security electronically, including IT systems and platforms such as EESSI and ESSPASS.

Cross-cutting activities such as communication and dissemination will help achieve the EaSI strand priorities. The Commission will organise activities for mutual learning such as exchange of good practices, or other events and support studies, reports (such as the Labour Force Survey), information material and media coverage. The Commission will also support one major Council Presidency event and three networking events per semester, as well as organising one flagship event.

Furthermore, using the dedicated allocation (30.8 million in 2024) from the shared management budget under the ESF+ provisions, the Commission runs a **transnational cooperation scheme** with a view to transferring and upscaling outcomes of innovative solutions. Following a call for expression of interest, the Lithuanian ESF Agency (ESFA) has been entrusted with its implementation. The initiative includes two work streams:

- A grant scheme (calls for proposals) for transnational projects helping to conceptualise, further develop, validate scale-up and/or roll out social innovations. In 2024 the thematic

focus will be on territorial measures against long term unemployment involving primarily social economy entities (Zero-long-term unemployment approach).

- A European Competence Centre for Social Innovation, which will support transnational cooperation and capacity building for ESF+ Managing Authorities and other relevant stakeholders. It will also collect, assess, develop, validate, and disseminate knowledge, tools, and methods for social innovation.

Part 2 – Grants, Procurements, Indirect Management and other actions and expenditures

1. Introduction

On the basis of the objectives in the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for year 2024 as follows:

1.1. Legal basis

Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013

1.2. Budget breakdown

| Budget Line | Amount |
|---|------------------------|
| 07.020100.05 - ESF+ shared management strand - Operational expenditure (Transnational cooperation) | EUR 30 860 140 |
| 07.020400 - ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand | EUR 96 245 750 |
| TOTAL | EUR 127 105 890 |

1.3. Type of actions to be financed

- for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): EUR 40 985 000

| Budget Line | Amount |
|-------------|------------|
| 07.020400 | 40 985 000 |

- for prizes (implemented under direct management) (point 3): N/A

- for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 4): EUR 25 260 750

| Budget Line | Amount |
|-------------|------------|
| 07.020400 | 25 260 750 |

- for actions implemented under indirect management (point 5): EUR 37 675 140

| Budget Line | Amount |
|--------------|------------|
| 07.020100.05 | 30 860 140 |
| 07.020400 | 6 815 000 |

- for contributions to trust funds (point 6): N/A

- for financial instruments (point 7): N/A

- for contributions to blending facilities (point 8): 20 000 000

| Budget Line | Amount |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 07.020400 | 20 000 000 |

- for other actions or expenditure (point 9): EUR 3 185 000

| Budget Line | Amount |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 07.020400 | 3 185 000 |

1.4. Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

All the actions under the EaSI strand of the ESF+ programme, financed mainly through grants and procurements, aim to achieve high employment levels, fair social protection and a skilled and resilient workforce, as well as inclusive and cohesive societies in the Union.

Some of the programmed actions may positively contribute to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming as support to fair twin transitions and to green jobs, green skills and green economy are encompassed in the objectives of the ESF+ programme and its operations have to be implemented accordingly. Actions in this work programme are expected to have a neutral impact on climate objective with a possibility of a positive contribution, which is, however, impossible to quantify.

2. Grants

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme is set in point 1.3.

BUDGET LINE

07.020400- ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand

2.1. Direct grants (awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation)

2.1.1. Events organised by the Presidency of the Council of the EU (2024)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The EaSI strand will support the deepening of the EU employment and social agenda during the two terms of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU with a series of events to be organised by presidencies.

These events will mainly fall in two categories: a) Presidency conferences. The topics are defined by the Presidency in agreement with the Commission and aim to contribute to defining and raising awareness on policy priorities ; and b) meetings of permanent EU networks and Committees under the Presidency auspices, providing a platform for Member States and relevant stakeholders to exchange information and good practices notably in the field of occupational safety and health (OSH); Public Employment Services (PES); Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC).

Type of applicants targeted by the action

The Member State holding the Council Presidency - or the Member State mandated by the

Council for the organisation of inter-governmental event in the area of employment, skills, social affairs and labour mobility - is the beneficiary of the grant to be awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195(c) of Financial Regulation. Given the unique role of the Presidency in the framework of EU activities, the Member State responsible for the organisation of the event is considered as a de jure monopoly.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.1.2. Direct grants to Member States: Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

European statistics provided by the EU LFS are needed for the programming and implementation of EU policies in the area of employment, skills, social affairs and labour mobility.

The LFS is an important source of information on the situation and trends in the EU labour market. Its modules aim to provide users with statistics on a specific detailed topic or ad-hoc subject concerning the labour market by adding each year a set of variables to supplement the core LFS (as stipulated by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/256 establishing a multiannual rolling planning). This activity will support the LFS by financing grants to the participating countries for projects aiming at implementing specific modules and pilot studies.

The overall objective is to further develop analytical capacity and allow monitoring of developments and trends in the EU in the following areas: employment and labour markets, health and disability, skills and training. The data collected provide input to the European Semester, the Social Scoreboard and the work of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Protection Committee (SPC). The collection of labour market policy statistics and expansion of the data collection cover new arising needs.

This action will contribute to the monitoring of the European Pillar of Social Rights principles, notably 2 “Gender equality”, 3 “Equal opportunities”, 6 “Wages”, 12 “Social protection” and 20 “Access to essential services”.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

According to Article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for activities with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. The individual award decisions substantiating the specific characteristics of the activities and the particular technical competence, high degree of specialisation or administrative power of the beneficiaries will be adopted at a later stage by ESTAT.

Applicants must be National Statistical Institutes (NSI) and other National Authorities as designated by the Member States and being members of the European Statistical System.

Implementation

Through a co-delegation to ESTAT

2.1.3. Direct grant to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) Monographs Programme

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The activities to be funded will provide and disseminate world-wide authoritative, up-to-date evaluations of environmental and occupational exposure that may present hazards to human health.

The provision of reliable scientific evaluations on risks derived from exposure to carcinogenic substances through the IARC Monographs are of high value to the work of the Commission (e.g. related to the revision of CMR Directive²²) and its associated scientific committees. They support the scientific committees in developing sound recommendations and opinions on limit values for chemicals based on IARC Monographs (among other relevant literature).

This grant supports principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

According to article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals.

The IARC, an independent and world-wide recognised research organization under the WHO, provides unique scientific advice on environmental and occupational exposure that may present hazards to human health.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.1.4. Direct Grant to the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Activities to be funded will provide information and updated scientific evidence relevant to EU actions that foster protection of safety and health of workers. It aims in particular at maintaining Directive 2013/35/EU adapted to the scientific developments.

Activities will also relate to the dissemination of information and advice on the potential health hazards of exposure to non-ionising radiation, aiming to protect people, including

²² Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic substances at work

workers, from detrimental NIR exposure.

This grant supports principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

According to article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals.

The ICNIRP, an independent and worldwide recognised research organization, provides unique scientific advice and guidance on the health effects of non-ionizing radiation (NIR).

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2. Calls for proposals²³

2.2.1. Call for proposals: Annual operating grants to support EU level Social NGO Networks

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The call aims at promoting social inclusion and combating poverty by providing financial support (annual operating grants for 2025) to EU-level networks of civil society organisations active in this area at local, regional, national and transnational level.

It will thereby contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan, ensuring just transitions, protecting livelihoods, boosting employment, reducing poverty and inequalities and creating opportunities for all. They particularly focus on principles aiming at ensuring access to adequate social protection throughout the life cycle and tackling barriers to social inclusion of certain particularly disadvantaged groups such as the inclusion of people with disabilities and housing and assistance for the homeless.

The activities to be funded include, among others: analytical activities, training and capacity building activities, mutual learning and exchange of good practices, awareness raising, information and dissemination activities with EU added value.

The expected results are:

- Improved awareness about EU policies and funding among the network's members;
- Increased awareness of EU and national authorities about the needs and potential of organisations represented by the networks;
- Increased capacity of the networks and their members to support policy making in their

²³ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

respective areas;

- Enhanced research and availability of data about the fields in which the networks operate.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

Grants may be awarded only to networks that have signed a framework partnership agreement with the Commission for the period 2022-2025 (following the call ESF-2021-OG-NETW-NGO-FPA).

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2.2. Call for proposals: Annual operating grants to support networks active in the areas of social enterprise finance and microfinance

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The action aims to provide specific operating grants to the organisations that have signed a 4-year Framework Partnership Agreement, i.e. networks in the areas of microfinance and social enterprise support. The activities to be funded contain, among others, outreach activities, mutual learning among members, research activities and input for policy design.

Social economy entities, social enterprises and microenterprises are instrumental in the implementation of many of the European Pillar of Social Rights principles. In particular they play a key role in delivering the following principles: 03. Equal opportunities, 04. Active support to employment, 05. Secure and adaptable employment, 11. Childcare and support to children, 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities, 18. Long-term care and 20. Access to essential services. To support the development in this field, the Commission cooperates with EU level networks in its outreach activities at EU, national and local level.

EU level networks are also key partners in the consultation and implementation of the Action Plan for Social Economy, as well as on a number of other policy files such as long-term care, green transition and social innovation. This partnership will enhance the capacities of these networks to contribute actively to the development and implementation of the EU policies in this area.

The expected results for the Commission are to: (a) benefit from the networks' expertise as regards the challenges (and ways to tackle them) that social enterprises, microenterprises and their support organisations/intermediaries face in the various Member States and; (b) be supported in its outreach activities at EU, national and local level with the aim of ensuring awareness, contribution to and implementation of EU level policies and initiatives in the areas of social enterprise and microenterprise finance.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

Grants may be awarded only to the networks in the areas of microfinance and social enterprise support that have signed a framework partnership agreement with the Commission for the period 2022-2025 (following the call ESF-2021-OG-NETW-MF-SE-FPA)

Implementation

2.2.3. Call for proposals: EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS) constitutes a European labour market measure to tackle labour shortages and hard-to-fill vacancies, combining tailor-made recruitment, matching, training and placement services with financial incentives. The support measures may vary according to labour market needs but should at least include provisions for interviews in another Member States, relocation, linguistic training as well as work and country integration support. The end beneficiaries will be jobseekers and job changers, trainees and apprentices as well as recruiting enterprises, including SMEs. Both individuals and enterprises (SMEs) may receive direct financial support in the form of targeted allowances.

The action targets the filling of hard-to-fill vacancies as identified in national/EU labour market studies or other data sources. The action being strongly result-oriented may contribute to: a) address labour market needs; b) improve the conditions for jobseekers and workers to exercise their right of freedom of movement across the EU and to address labour markets' imbalances and, labour and skills shortages. C) enhance the service catalogue of the EURES organisations; d) foster public-private partnerships within EURES. The overall objective of this call for proposals is to ensure around 4 000 placements, in particular of young people.

The act'vities will cover the provision of direct services to jobseekers and employers, notably: (a) information, recruitment, matching and placement; (b) pre- and post-placement support to customers (e. g. profiling and pre-selection of candidates, language training or other training needs, mentoring support for trainees and apprentices); and (c) direct financial support to candidates and SMEs (interview and relocation trip costs, language trainings, recognition of qualifications, induction training programmes by SMEs).

The action supports the implementation of the European Pillar of Social rights, in particular principles 3. Equal opportunities and 4. Active support to employment.

Type of applicants targeted by the action²⁴

The coordinator must be no profit entities, listed in the following categories:

- EURES National Coordination Offices,
- EURES members or EURES partners which are placed in organisations whose main mission is to ensure the provision of employment and placement services to jobseekers, job changers, trainee/apprentice candidates and employers covering jobs and/or work-based trainings. Those services must include information, recruitment, matching and pre- and post-placement support.

Co-applicants must be legal entities listed in the following categories:

²⁴ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

- EURES member organisations (i.e. National Coordination Offices, EURES Members and Partners),
- Public or private labour market actors (including the third sector) providing the same services as lead applicants and/or complementary customer-oriented services in other expertise fields such as information, training, education, career guidance, mentoring, legal advice, integration support or other equivalent.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2.4. Social innovation call for proposals: actions to develop impact performance

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The objective of the call is to promote the provision of enhanced data capabilities services, as well as impact management tools and practices to social purpose entities (such as –but not exclusively– social enterprises, social economy entities, social start-up, impact firms) to increase their social impact investment capacity.

The activities to be funded will support the design, experimentation, piloting, validation, development and/or expansion of impact data verification and impact performance intelligence services, and other knowledge-driven innovation models for social impact investing .

The expected result is to have more and better informed investment decisions, greater market transparency, and performance benchmarking.

A stronger, more transparent, and better functioning market for social impact investment is instrumental to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights by promoting investments in many of the areas covered by its principles, and especially the following: 3. Equal opportunities, 4. Active support to employment, 5. Secure and adaptable employment, 11. Childcare and support to children, 12. Social protection, 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities, 18. Long-term care, 19. Housing and assistance for the homeless, and 20. Access to essential services.

Type of applicants targeted by the action²⁵

By a consortium with at least one research centre or entity affiliated with a University. And at least either a private or public investor; or a support organization that would provide a business development plan.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

²⁵ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

3. Prizes

N/A

4. Procurement

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts under this work programme is set in point 1.3. IT development and procurement strategy choices will be subject to pre-approval by the European Commission Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board.

BUDGET LINE

07.020400- ESF+ - Employment and Social Innovation strand

Objectives pursued and expected results

Activities implemented through procurement contracts will assist in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its action plan, the policy initiatives of the Commission Work programme in the field of employment and social inclusion as well as the European Semester, through improved capacity of Member States and stakeholders, mutual learning, general communication and raising awareness among stakeholders, developing evidence basis, and supporting stakeholders, including through improved IT tools.

Subject matter of the contracts envisaged

In 2024, the Commission intends to undertake actions through contracts following public procurement (call for tenders and framework contracts) or administrative arrangements in the following policy areas:

4.1. Employment and skills

The actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including evaluation, statistics and surveys, expert network), mutual-learning, exchange of good practices, evaluation of policy initiatives, advisory services and technical assistance, meetings and events, awareness raising on employment policy related issues, IT, trainings, communication, dissemination and capacity-building activities in relation with the implementation of the employment and skills related objectives outlined in the EPSR Action Plan.

The actions may cover notably the areas of youth employment, long-term unemployment, undeclared work, platform work, quality job creation, entrepreneurship, microfinance and social enterprise finance, social economy, (fair) green and digital transition (e.g. such as a European fair transition observatory), digital nomadism, algorithmic management and artificial intelligence, quality traineeships, skills (such as European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)) and their development, including mutual recognition and transparency of competences, occupations and qualifications expert networks.

Activities are expected to strengthen and improve target employment policies.

Type of contracts

Service

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

4.2. Social protection and inclusion

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, statistics and surveys, expert network), mutual learning, exchange of good practices, promoting dialogue with civil society and stakeholders, exchange of social security information, IT, awareness raising, meetings and events, communication, dissemination and capacity-building activities, in relation with the social protection and inclusion objectives in the EPSR Plan.

The actions may cover notably the areas of inclusive employment and growth, alleviation of poverty, homelessness and social impact monitoring, the development of the Electronic Exchange of Social Information (EESSI), modernisation and reforms of social protection systems including pension (adequacy and sustainability of pensions), essential services and long-term care systems, demography and longevity.

Expected results include an improvement and alignment of the social protection and pension systems responding to challenges of the new forms of works in Member States and the implementation of the EPSR as regards social inclusion.

Type of contracts

Service

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

4.3. Labour markets and labour mobility

The actions in this policy area include analytical activities (including evaluation, statistics and surveys), data collection and availability, communication, dissemination and capacity-building activities, mutual-learning, exchange of good practices between competent authorities, meetings and conferences, technical assistance, and IT services (including the development and maintenance of the EURES portal and related translations), in relation with the equal opportunities and active support to employment objectives in the EPSR. Actions will also cover the areas of access to labour markets and labour mobility (including posting of workers and seasonal workers).

Expected results include enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services and improved labour markets and labour mobility.

Type of contracts

Service

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

4.4. Safe and fair working conditions

The actions in this policy area have the objective to support analytical activities (including evaluation, statistics and surveys, expert network), data collection and availability, mutual-learning, exchange of good practices between competent authorities, communication, meetings and conferences, dissemination and capacity-building activities in relation to safe and fair working conditions.

The actions may cover notably the areas of mental health, labour law, occupational diseases, Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) and international labour standards.

These activities should contribute to refining and improving legislation on working conditions in the Member State and improve working conditions in the Member States.

Type of contracts

Service

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

4.5. Cross-cutting issues

The actions in this section have the objective to support cooperation with key international partners (such as the International Labour Organization (ILO)), analytical activities, data collection and availability (including evaluation, statistics and surveys), mutual-learning, capacity building, exchange of good practices with third countries, cross-cutting themes (e.g. equality), DG EMPL communication and dissemination activities, meetings and events, horizontal and cross-cutting IT, audits, monitoring, contribution to corporate IT and communication.

The expected results include improved cooperation with partner countries, international organisations and stakeholders, enhanced IT processes, better regulation and wider and high-quality outreach to the European citizens and beyond.

Type of contracts

Service

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegations to DG COMM, DG DIGIT, DG REGIO

5. *Actions implemented under indirect management*

The overall budgetary allocation reserved for actions implemented under indirect management is set in point 1.3.

BUDGET LINE

07.020100.05 - ESF+ shared management strand - Operational expenditure (Transnational cooperation)

5.1. Transnational cooperation initiative for Social innovation

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the Lithuanian ESF Agency (ESFA) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The Lithuanian implementing agency for ESF+ (ESFA) has been selected, as a result of a competitive procedure through a call for expression of interest, for the programming period 2021-2027 to work under indirect management with DG EMPL. Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Social innovation has become crucial as it opens up new inclusive and participatory ways of facing, in the interest of and for the benefit of European citizens, societal challenges that

transform the world of work, education, training and social services. Against this background, the ESF+ Regulation, notably its Article 5 provides a budget of EUR 175 million in 2018 prices for transnational cooperation for social innovation for 2021-2027. The action is implemented with subsequent contribution agreements with the entrusted entity, based on annually available budget during the programming period.

The main objectives of the transnational cooperation initiative for Social innovation are: (a) the dissemination, transfer and scaling-up of innovative solutions relevant to today's societal challenges that transform the world of work, education, training and social services; (b) increased capacity of ESF+ managing authorities and relevant stakeholders in supporting social innovation; (c) a more coherent policy regarding social innovation at EU level as well as in the Member States and eligible non-EU countries. This in complementarity to the Member State's activities under the ESF+ in shared management and to the social experimentation implemented under the EaSI strand.

The following implementation tasks are included: (a) Prepare and implement EU wide transnational calls for proposals projects related to social innovation and/or social policy experimentation; (b) Support the capacity building of stakeholders, in cooperation with the forthcoming National competence centres for social innovation; (c) Validate and showcase innovative solutions, including through the EU social innovation database; (d) Prepare the continuation of the EU level thematic cooperation and mutual learning between the ESF managing authorities.

As a thematically transversal concept, the transnational cooperation initiative for Social innovation supports the implementation of all chapters of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

BUDGET LINE

07.020400- ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand

5.2. Contribution agreement with the OECD: joint project on counterfactual impact evaluation of active labour market and social policies (ALMPs; 2nd phase)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The second phase of the DG EMPL-OECD joint project will be implemented in co-operation with the Competence Centre on Microeconomic Evaluation (CC-ME) of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). It will provide support to participating Member States to use linked administrative and survey data for counter-factual impact evaluations (CIEs) when evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of labour market programmes and social policies.

The new joint project will support EU countries in: (a) generating evidence on the social impact of active labour market policies (ALMPs); and (b) taking these into account together with all costs and benefits to inform decisions on investments into ALMPs. As a result, Member States will be able to build capacity, apply the methodologies and ensure data availability to generate more encompassing evidence on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of ALMPs, going beyond labour market outcomes. The ultimate objective is that Member States use this evidence to direct funding towards policies that have higher

overall societal returns.

This is in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights principles on education, training and life-long learning, equal opportunities and active support to employment.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the OECD on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The OECD has unique competence in conducting impact evaluations, cost-benefit and data analysis on ALMPs due to its vast previous experience (joint project²⁶). In addition, the OECD can bring in lessons and experiences from non-EU OECD countries and can mobilise its extensive network of researchers, experts and policy makers across the world.

5.3. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Monitoring the Adequacy of Social Protection in Long-term Care

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The principal aim of this action is to design and update indicators for effective social protection for older people with long-term care (LTC) needs in EU countries.

The action will continue the cooperation with the OECD on social protection in long-term care, including an update of the indicators using SHARE wave 9, extension to new Member States and thematic analysis of selected topics (to be agreed in 2024). It will feed into the third LTC report jointly prepared by the European Commission and the Social Protection Committee, the 2027 Pension Adequacy Report, the 2027 LTC monitoring report and contribute to policy development and mutual learning in this area.

The action addresses the following principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights: 12. Social protection, 16. Health care, 18. Long-term care, and 20. Access to essential services.

Implementing entity

Entrusted implementation tasks and funds to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The OECD has a unique competence and expertise on both long-term care and statistical modelling as demonstrated by its past collaboration with EU Member States in the area of long-term care.

²⁶ C(2019)7630 Commission implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the 2020 annual work programme for grants and procurement for the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI"), serving as financing decision (2.2.2 Direct grant to the OECD 'Pilot studies on impact evaluation of labour market and social policies through the use of linked administrative and survey data')

5.4. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Global Deal to promote capacity building for social dialogue and collective bargaining in third countries (2nd phase)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Effective social dialogue requires mutual respect and trust to create favourable conditions for collaboration between employers, workers and governments. This can promote quality labour conditions and competition, enhance economic stability and shared prosperity. The Global Deal brings together various stakeholders - including trade unions and employer organisations - to support social dialogue by promoting joint solutions.

The Global Deal will support regional events to promote social dialogue and collective bargaining, research on social dialogue and capacity building in third countries, especially countries with which the EU has a free trade agreement or which benefit from Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP).

This action will contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights principles 01. Education, training and life-long learning, 02. Gender equality, 03. Equal opportunities, 04. Active support to employment, 07. Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals, 08. Social dialogue and involvement of workers, 09. Work-life, 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The OECD hosts the Global Deal support unit that implements the activities of the Global Deal initiative. The initiative has a unique experience and knowledge from bringing together over 130 actors that committed to strengthen social dialogue and advance decent work, including governments, employer's organisations and trade unions.

5.5. Contribution agreement with International Labour Organisation (ILO): Strengthen the occupational safety and health (OSH) and notably the labour inspections in the Mediterranean Region (2nd phase)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The action aims to address the occupational safety and health (OSH) challenges in the Mediterranean region and notably to strengthen the labour inspections, especially in the post-covid and post-crisis recovery. It will build on the results obtained in the pilot action²⁷ supported in 2022-2023 and scale-up impact in supporting the Mediterranean region to improve occupational safety and health.

²⁷ C(2021)8795 Commission Decision on the adoption of the 2022 annual work programme for grants and procurement within the framework of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and in particular its Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand: "5.6. Contribution agreement with ILO: Strengthen the occupational safety and health (OSH) and notably the labour inspections in the Mediterranean Region – Phase I"

The focus of the project is in line with the international dimension of the EU OSH Strategic Framework (2021-2027), as well as with the EC Joint Communication on the renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood - A new Agenda for the Mediterranean.

The action will include several components: organization of joint conferences and workshops; research on common challenges (such as migrant work, informal economy); campaign for ratification of Convention 129 on Labour Inspections in agriculture (8 countries in the region have not ratified yet); harmonization of labour inspection statistics; expanded use of ILO expertise and knowledge of comparative practice on labour inspections. Expected results are better awareness of workers and improved situation of labour inspections.

This action is supporting the principles of the European Pillar of social rights and in particular principles 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection, 5. Secure and adaptable employment and 8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the ILO on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The ILO has a unique competence and expertise as well as dedicated staff working in the relevant countries which makes them best placed to continue with phase 2 of this action.

5.6. Contribution agreement with International Labour Organisation (ILO): Vision Zero Fund (VZF) on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in global supply chains (GSC)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Protecting the fundamental human right to a safe and healthy workplace has become a priority for the European Commission. The VZF, established by the G7 and managed by the International Labour Office (ILO), helps the EU achieve objectives to promote a level playing field and to address decent work deficits across global supply chains. The project is especially relevant after the agreement reached in the 2022 International Labour Conference (ILC) making Occupational Safety and Health a new Human Right.

An increasing number of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) include labour dimensions, either in the agreement itself or in a parallel agreement. Such labour clauses include a list of minimum commitments for the protection of human rights at work and refer to specific international labour standards adopted by the ILO.

The activities will cover new initiatives decided by the VZF steering committee where the Commission is a full member. This could include research, identification and development of good practices, advice to legislators, implementing authorities, social partners and private sector actors, information and training manuals, outreach, training and capacity building.

This action is supporting the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and in particular principles 1-3 and 6-18.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the ILO on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The EU can benefit from the ILO's know-how and field presence. The ILO has also a mandate to work on sensitive but very important issues for EU such as trade, employment and labour. All EU Free Trade Agreements and the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) trade system include commitments on ratification and application of ILO labour conventions.

5.7. Contribution agreement with the International Labour Organisation (ILO): Supporting youth employment and investment in skills in developing countries

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The activities to be funded will aim at building a network of experts in the area of youth employment policies. The project should notably include mapping of existing networks and gaps, the collection of good practices and lessons learned, research and dissemination workshops.

The objectives of the project are: (a) to accelerate the spread of good practices on youth employment policies and skills investment in developing countries; and (b) help them to integrate more young people into the labour market over the next decade. It would also raise awareness about the opportunities arising under the new EU talent partnerships. Young people tend to have significantly higher unemployment rates than the rest of the population. The collection of good practices will help policymakers make better informed decisions in their respective labour markets.

A close cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) contributes to promoting decent work and social inclusion worldwide. It will notably develop and promote the external dimension of the EU's employment and social policies and instruments, building on the European Pillar of Social Rights (principles 1. Education, training and life-long learning; 2. Gender equality; 3. Equal opportunities; 4. Active support to employment) and the EU international commitments in these domains.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The ILO has long experience in providing technical assistance and capacity building for youth policy in Southern Mediterranean countries in cooperation with the EU. Its unique tripartite structure allows it to promote dialogue, mutual understanding and concerted actions between governments, trade unions and employers' associations. Another good example is the 'Youth Guarantee' programme supported by the EU and implemented by the ILO in enlargement countries.

5.8. Contribution agreement with the International Labour Organisation (ILO): Promoting decent work and capacity building for labour ministries, labour inspections and social partners in developing countries

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The project will contribute to implementing the EU's strong political commitment to promote decent work worldwide (Decent Work Worldwide Communication of February 2022).

Activities to be funded may notably include cross-country learning webinars and workshops among labour ministries, labour inspection services, employer organisations and trade unions, as well as social economy actors where relevant. They will aim at creating networks and capacity across developing countries and the EU.

The objectives are to promote decent work worldwide by: (a) supporting convergence towards high labour standards in developing countries; (b) protecting workers in countries with high labour standards (including in Europe) against unfair competition from developing countries in which fundamental labour standards are not yet effectively upheld; (c) prepare the ground for future constructive policy dialogues on labour standards between developing countries and the EU.

The project will in particular promote the European Social Pillar principles 08. Social dialogue and involvement of workers; 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection; and 12. Social protection.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the ILO on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The ILO has the most authoritative status regarding the promotion of 'decent work' and labour rights worldwide, including long experience in providing technical assistance and capacity building. Its unique tripartite structure allows it to promote dialogue, mutual understanding and convergence of positions among governments, trade unions and employers' associations.

5.9. Contribution agreement with World Health Organisation (WHO): International Programme on Chemical Safety

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The International Programme on Chemical Safety of the World Health Organization (WHO/IPCS) provides information, methodologies and tools to be used to manage the risks posed by chemicals.

WHO/IPCS activities include: (a) developing and updating information to prevent occupational exposure to hazardous chemicals; (b) coordinating the development of chemical risk assessment methodologies between institutions; (c) developing and promoting tools for risk management of priority chemicals of major health concern; (d) assisting the dissemination of good practices for managing risks from existing and new substances which

have significant effects on health.

These information products and tools are used to develop policy on the sound management of chemicals and include preventive measures for occupational exposures to hazardous chemicals, which are a significant cause of mortality and ill health in workers.

This activity contributes to the implementation of European Pillar of Social Rights principle 10 on healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the World Health Organization (WHO) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The WHO, through its International Programme on Chemical Safety, makes a valuable contribution by providing updated and reliable scientific evaluations on risks derived from exposure to chemicals.

5.10. Contribution agreement with the Council of Europe (CoE): ROMACT 10

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

ROMACT 10 will pursue the ROMACT Programme, which builds the capacity of local authorities to develop and implement plans and projects for the socio-economic inclusion of Roma. The support provided consists of capacity building measures at municipal level for better planning and use of resources with the aim of improving the living conditions of disadvantaged communities, including the Roma.

Evidence from the ground is brought further from this process (through survey reports, policy analysis etc.) to inform policy development at national level. This can include assessment of the needs and priorities, expert support to municipalities and other relevant stakeholders, capacity building in the form of training and coaching, support for development of institutional partnerships and provisions of small grants to municipalities and their partners.

The objective is to improve the capacity of local authorities to successfully include the Roma population in the society. It will in particular contribute to the implementation of principle 3. Equal opportunities, of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the Council of Europe on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation. The Council of Europe has a unique know how in this area and is the only organisation that could implement the action.

6. Contributions to trust funds

N/A

7. Financial instruments

N/A

8. Contributions to blending facilities: Blending operations under the InvestEU Fund

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for blending facilities under this work programme is set in point 1.3.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The contribution will complement the financial products under the Social Investment and Skills Window (SISW) of the InvestEU programme with a non-repayable component.

The objective of the contribution is to increase the impact of the existing InvestEU products to further develop the social investment market and the microfinance ecosystem and provide additional support to final beneficiaries, in particular microfinance institutions, microenterprises and social enterprises.

The type of support provided in blending operations could take the form of grants or other types of non-repayable support, including transaction cost support, investment grants, interest rate subsidies, business development services, guarantees, and will allow to de-risk investments that would otherwise be considered too risky.

This activity would support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social rights, in particular principles 02. Gender equality, 03. Equal opportunities, 04. Active support to employment, and 05. Secure and adaptable employment.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), on the basis of Articles 62(c)(ii) and (iii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

These two InvestEU Implementing Partners provide the suitable financial products – loans and equity – to address social impact investments needs in the area of social economy, social enterprises and microfinance. These products are specified under the Social Investment and Skills Window (SISW) in the respective InvestEU guarantee agreements, signed with the EIF and the CEB on 7 march 2022 and 28 November 2022 respectively.

The details regarding the underlying financial structure, including the risk-sharing arrangement between the Commission and the European Investment Fund and the Council of Europe Development Bank and eligibility rules related to blending operations will be specified in an amendment to the Guarantee Agreements.

9. Other actions or expenditure

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for other actions or expenditure under this work programme is set in point 1.3.

BUDGET LINE

07.020400- ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand

9.1. Various meetings of standing, ad-hoc committees and other events

Description and objective of the implementing measure

To support events and meetings organised by DG EMPL for example in the field of safety and health at work, employment, skills, mobility, social inclusion, social protection, social security coordination, working conditions, labour law, social economy, and pensions.

Implementation

Co-delegation to PMO

9.2. Scientific support for evaluation of chemicals at work

Description and objective of the implementing measure

Opinions to prepare future updates of Directives 98/24/EC and 2004/37/EC, to provide the appropriate administrative, technical and scientific support by the Risk Assessment Committee (RAC) which carries out the evaluations of the occupational exposure limits for hazardous chemicals with the intent to develop proposals to establish the appropriate Occupational Exposure Limits (OEL) at European Union level.

Implementation

Service level agreements with ECHA

9.3. Support for data collection and management, analysis, training, studies and evaluations

Description and objective of the implementing measure

The actions will include thematic analysis on employment and social-related challenges (such as exploring the concept of beyond GDP/wellbeing and contributing to the Employment and Social Developments in Europe report); maintain and update (Euromod) modelling tools for assessing the impact of tax-benefit reforms; delivery and operation of an e-learning platform; work on employment, green jobs, skills, working and living conditions, and industrial relations; work on lower pay rates set in collective agreements for low paid jobs; work on a regional modelling of distributional impact of human capital and related policy measures.

Implementation

Service level agreements with JRC and Eurofound

9.4. Publications

Description and objective of the implementing measure

Conception, printing, storage and distribution of DG EMPL publications in various areas.

Implementation

Co-delegation to OP

9.5. External evaluators**Description and objective of the implementing measure**

The Commission may select external expert evaluators to assist in the evaluation of applications to calls for proposals.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL