

EN

ANNEX

2025 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 – Introduction

Delivering on EU policy priorities

The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) invests in evidence-based policy-making, social innovation and social experimentation, supports job mobility as well as capacity building of beneficiaries. In line with the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) policy objectives, it is one of the tools contributing to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, mainly addressing the areas of employment and skills, labour markets and labour mobility, social protection, active inclusion and working conditions.

Socio-economic context

The EaSI work programme for 2025 is set in a socio-economic context marked by (a) moderate economic growth which should accelerate in 2025¹; (b) a sustained decrease of inflation, driven by a fall in energy and retail prices; and (c) robust job markets with high EU employment rates and unemployment rates standing at their record low.

Despite relatively stable poverty and inequality indicators, EU households, and the most vulnerable persons are still fragile following the COVID crisis and the increase in inflation (mainly driven by energy and food prices). In addition, the international instability caused by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East, bring a high level of uncertainty.

Policy context

This work programme, contributing to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and its Action Plan, will: (a) build on continuity with previous work-programmes which have funded activities in support of key Commission's initiatives²; (b) support policy initiatives and operational needs under the new Commission's mandate following the June 2024 European elections.

The review of the EPSR Action Plan in 2025 will assess the impact of the initiatives contained therein and the progress made towards reaching the 2030 EU headline targets. It will be the basis for a new Action Plan, aiming to propose ambitious initiatives that continue to make Europe more social during the next political term.

Key actions will address amongst others labour and skill shortages, improve working conditions for all types of workers, increase the involvement of underrepresented groups in the workforce, ensure the green and digital transitions leave no one behind and focus on the ongoing battle against poverty, social exclusion, inequalities, and discrimination. The new Action Plan will moreover continue the efforts to break silos and better mainstream social affairs with the aim of safeguarding Europe's unique quality of life, which serves both as a competitive advantage for the economy and as an essential pillar of the society.

¹ 2024 Spring Economic Forecast – https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-forecast-and-surveys/economic-forecasts/spring-2024-economic-forecast-gradual-expansion-amid-high-geopolitical-risks_en

² Key activities in the EaSI strand Work Programme for 2024 relate to the proposal for a Directive on platform work ([EUR-Lex - 52021PC0762 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)), the revision of the Regulation on coordination of social security systems (Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems), [Commission work programme 2024 - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

Programming priorities for 2025

The EaSI strand's work programme for 2025 will pursue the achievements of the general objectives of the ESF+³. It will aim to strengthen employment, ensure fair labour mobility as well as safe and fair working conditions, foster education and skills and contribute to improving social protection and inclusion. The green and digital transition as well as demographic change will remain major drivers for structural change. The work-programme will notably support analyses and initiatives on adaptable and inclusive labour markets, promoting social protection and inclusion, including addressing poverty, particularly the context of the twin transition.

These priorities are detailed in relation to the operational objectives set out in the Article 25 of the ESF+ Regulation.

- *Enhancing analytical knowledge (art 25(a))*

The work programme includes activities contributing to policy making and economic governance in the fields of social (e.g. the Expert Network for Analytical Support in Social Policies), employment and labour market policies (e.g. the European Center of Expertise in the field of labour law). It will provide data and analysis on health and safety at work (e.g. agreements with the World Health Organisation and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)). Specialised studies will also be delivered by working with the OECD and the Joint Research Centre. Ad-hoc analytical studies may also be launched in these areas.

The analytical work may notably cover social protection, pensions, long-term care, health and safety at work, chemical safety, green jobs and green economy, twin transition, essential and social services, social inclusion and social safety nets, affordable housing, working conditions, the impact of Artificial Intelligence/Algorithmic Management on the world of work, the Youth Guarantee, the Child Guarantee and long-term unemployment. It will support the continued measuring of ageing (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe - SHARE) and the provision of statistics in the area of employment, skills, social affairs and labour mobility (Labour Force Survey -LFS).

The EaSI strand will also provide funding for evaluations, studies, impact assessments, monitoring and audits.

- *Information sharing, mutual learning, peer reviews (art 25 (b))*

The EaSI strand will notably support:

- The communication campaign promoting the European Pillar of Social Rights and the 2025 review of its Action plan (notably supporting a high-level conference on the "Porto Social Forum");
- Services and measures to enhance cooperation between Public Employment Services;
- The meetings of the Social Protection Committee (SPC), the Employment Committee (EMCO), the Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work, the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) and other expert groups (e.g. labour law);
- Peer reviews, including in the context of the transposition of the Minimum Wage Directive and of the Directive on platform work;
- The Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) through communication, mutual learning activities and support to social economy stakeholders;

³ [Regulation - 2021/1057 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#), Article 4.

- Mutual learning and communication activities in relation to social protection, including long-term care and pensions, Child Guarantee, social impact analysis and social investments, and in the employment area (European Employment Strategy);
- The European Platform on Combatting Homelessness.

- ***Social experimentations (c) and social innovation (art 25(i))***

The Lithuanian ESF Agency (ESFA) has been entrusted by the Commission with the implementation of a transnational cooperation scheme aiming to transfer and upscale outcomes of innovative solutions.

It includes two work streams:

- A European Competence Centre for Social Innovation which supports transnational cooperation and capacity building for ESF+ Managing Authorities and other relevant stakeholders;
- A grant scheme for transnational projects helping to conceptualise, further develop, validate scale-up and/or roll out social innovations. Two calls are foreseen in 2025:
 - 1) Social experimentation: a call to support the implementation of the ‘Disability Employment Package’ under the heading ‘Social Protection and Inclusion’.
 - 2) Social innovation: a call to support the transfer and scaling up of innovative approaches tackling child poverty. It follows up on consultations with the ESF+ Committee and the joint EaSI/ESF TWG from 2023.

- ***Mobility of workers (art 25(d))***

The Commission will promote workers' intra-EU labour mobility and boost employment opportunities by further developing the EURES job mobility portal and supporting EURES cross-border partnerships and initiatives (call for proposals).

The work programme will also support the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) and IT systems and platforms that facilitate social protection implementation across the EU and help institutions across the EU to exchange social security information electronically, including EESSI.

- ***Institutional capacity building, EU level networking and dialogue (art 25(f))***

Two calls for proposals will be published to ensure continued support for EU-level networks active in the areas of social inclusion, social economy and social finance. Support will also be provided to the Public Employment Services (PES) Network Board.

The Commission will organise a flagship event on social and employment policies and co-finance Presidency events on the following subjects:

- High-level conference on the evaluation of the action plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors (SLIC) - Thematic Days - Plenary meetings.
- Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC).

- ***International social and labour standards (art 25(j))***

With the aim to develop international social and labour standards, the work programme will:

- Support the work with international partners, such as the ILO, in particular on decent work in global supply chains, on occupational safety and health, and on labour inspections in different world regions.
- Support the relations with the EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions, as well as outreach activities to selected countries and regions on ensuring a level playing field on labour market policies.
- Ensure the continuation of political dialogues focused on international social and labour standards with key partners under bilateral cooperation frameworks.

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

1. Introduction

Based on 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 2025 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 10 023 222
07.020400 - ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand	EUR 114 016 102
TOTAL	EUR 124 039 324

1.3. Type of actions to be financed

- for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): EUR 41 535 000

Budget Line	Amount
07.020400	EUR 41 535 000

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

- for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 4): EUR 39 805 602

Budget Line	Amount
07.020400	EUR 39 805 602

- for actions implemented under indirect management (point 5): EUR 34 638 222

Budget Line	Amount
07.020100.05	EUR 10 023 222
07.020400	EUR 24 615 000

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

- for financial instruments (point 7): N/A
- for contributions to blending facilities (point 8): N/A
- for other actions or expenditure (point 9): EUR 8 060 500

Budget Line	Amount
07.020400	EUR 8 060 500

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 198 of the Financial Regulation)

2.1.1. Direct Grant to the Government of the Republic of Portugal or its designated bodies to support a high-level conference: the “Porto Social Forum”

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

<p>As mentioned in the joint statement by the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Portugal on 7 May 2022, Portugal should organise a Forum every two years in connection with the milestones of the Porto Social Commitment.</p> <p>The Forum under the exclusive initiative of the Government of the Republic of Portugal aims to further contribute to the social dimension of the Union and to follow the progress achieved towards the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. It will mobilise key actors, including civil society and social partners, and discuss policy responses to the EU’s major structural challenges and their impact on the social dimension.</p> <p>The grant will support the organisation and logistics of the high-level conference, covering, inter alia, rentals of venues and facilities, conference services, translation and interpretation, catering services, travel and accommodation, communication activities, and other support services.</p>
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Type of applicants targeted by the action

A direct grant will be awarded to Government entities (or designated bodies) of the Republic of Portugal, in accordance with Article 198(c) of the Financial Regulation, which stipulates that grants may be awarded without a call for proposals to bodies with a de jure or de facto monopoly or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are in a de jure or de facto monopoly situation.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.1.2. Events organised by the Presidency of the Council of the EU

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 an 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 198(c) of the 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

2.1.3. 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 198(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

2.1.4. 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 Directive⁴) 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.

⁴ Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic substances at work

Type of applicants targeted by the action

According to article 198 (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

2.1.5. 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 workers, from detrimental non-ionizing radiation (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 198 (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

2.1.6. Direct Grant to the European Research Infrastructure Consortium for the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

SHARE is a longitudinal survey covering the areas of long-term care, old-age, health, longer working lives and pensions that provides evidence not available from other sources, allowing

comparison between the Member States as to the social situation of older people. It is quite unique as it covers the interactions between health, economic, social and environmental policies, ensuring thus a comprehensive picture of all these dimensions. Ad-hoc policy notes using the collected data would also be produced to shed light on specific angles/policy issues (LTC, older persons with disabilities, retirement preferences). It also ensures continuity in measuring ageing and retirement (relevant as follow-up to the Demography toolbox and LTC Council Recommendation).

This grant supports most principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights on social protection and inclusion.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

According to Article 198 (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 activities concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals.”

The grant is to be awarded to the European Research Infrastructure Consortium for SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe), which was established by Commission Decision 2011/166/EU of 17 March 2011⁵. This body is the only one conducting a comprehensive survey on ageing in the EU and has, over a period of more than a decade, acquired a unique technical competence and acceptance in the scientific and policy-making community. The objective of this activity cannot be achieved in another way than by awarding it to SHARE. Costs of its affiliated entities that carry out the fieldwork in the Member States will be eligible.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2. Calls for proposals

2.2.1. Call for proposals: Framework partnership agreements and annual operating grants to support EU level Social NGO Networks

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The calls aims at promoting social inclusion and combating poverty by providing financial support (Framework Partnership Agreement 2026-2029 and first annual operating grants for 2026) 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

⁵ OJ L 71, 18.3.2011, p. 20.

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: (a) improved awareness about EU policies and funding among the network's members; (b) increased awareness of EU and national authorities about the needs and potential of organisations represented by the networks; (c) increased capacity of the networks and their members to support policy making in their respective areas; and (d) enhanced research and availability of data about the fields in which the networks operate.

Type of applicants targeted by the action⁶

European-level organisations which are non-governmental, non-profit-making, and independent of industry, commercial and business or other conflicting interests; whose mission falls under the objectives and scope of the relevant priorities of this call for proposals; which have national member organisations in at least fourteen (14) Member States of the European Union; whose members are mainly non-profit organisations; which are mandated by their members, through a Management Board or other administrative forum, to represent these members at the EU level and to be responsible for the activities of the network.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2.2. Call for proposals: Action grants to support EU networks active in the areas of social economy, social enterprise finance and microfinance

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

This call aims to support the development of social economy and social finance in Europe. The action grants will contribute to building up the institutional capacity of stakeholders, delivering support to social economy actors (e.g. cooperatives, social enterprises), as well as those supporting the development of social finance (i.e. microfinance, social enterprise finance and social impact investing) in Europe.

The call will help the Commission in the implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP), and other EU level initiatives relevant for the social economy. In particular the Council recommendation on social economy framework conditions that promotes employment, social inclusion, social innovation and the circular economy as well as actions aimed at enabling access to finance for social enterprises and microenterprises. The call encourages synergies and joint work between EU-level networks active in this area and the involvement of research entities to improve the availability and policy relevance of research and data. The activities to be funded contain, among others, outreach activities, mutual learning among members, research activities and input for policy design.

The expected results are: (a) Increased dissemination of EU policies and initiatives in the

⁶ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

area of the call and improved EU outreach activities at national and local level; (b) Improved capacity and awareness about EU policies and funding opportunities among the members of the networks and their beneficiaries; (c) Increased awareness about the potential of social economy, social enterprises and microenterprises, their needs and challenges at EU, national and local levels; (d) improved availability of research and data about the fields in which the beneficiaries operate.

Social economy entities, social enterprises and microenterprises are instrumental in the implementation of many of the European Pillar of Social Rights principles.

Type of applicants targeted by the action⁷

EU-level networks whose mission falls under the objectives and the priorities of the call for proposals, or a research centre, network or entity affiliated with a university active at EU level in the areas of the call, i.e. of social economy and social finance. Applications must cover at least 14 EU Member States and other EaSI strand associated countries, through the applicants' national member-organisations. Consortia are allowed; the coordinator must be an EU Network having national member-organisations in at least 7 Member States of the European Union and EaSI strand associated countries.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2.3. Call for proposals: EURES Cross-border partnerships and EURES cross-border initiatives

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The call for proposals will (a) support fair mobility for frontier workers in cross-border regions, in particular cross-border partnerships offering comprehensive EURES services for workers and employers in cross-border regions; (b) stimulate punctual support services for both employers and workers in cross-border regions in view of building a strong partnership between EURES members.

Contributing to the national work plan of the National Coordination Offices (NCO) of the countries involved, the activities will provide concrete data on obstacles to mobility in the cross-border region as well as improve the cross-border labour market, in particular as regards the filling of hard-to-fill vacancies and to tackle labour shortages in the target areas.

This action will contribute to the implementation of European Pillar of Social Rights principles 04. Active support to employment and 03. Equal opportunities and access to the labour market.

Type of applicants targeted by the action⁸

EURES National Coordination Offices; EURES member organisations and Partners; Social

⁷ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

⁸ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

partner organisations at European, national or regional level; Public or private employment services, third sector organisations or other relevant actors active on the EU/EEA labour market.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

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.

The Commission intends to launch an open tender procedure for the conclusion of a framework contract for services to organise external meetings and events (up to EUR 40 million). The maximum duration of the contract will be 4 years, starting in 2026.

BUDGET LINE

07.020400- ESF+ - Employment and Social Innovation strand

Objectives pursued and expected results

Activities implemented through procurement contracts will support 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. It will do so 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 2025

4.1. Employment and skills

The actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, evaluation, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network) as well as activities of mutual-learning, exchange of good practices, technical assistance, meetings and events, IT, trainings, awareness raising and communication, dissemination, and capacity-building. These activities relate to the employment and skills related objectives outlined in the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

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, 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 and where relevant co-delegations with DG DIGIT

4.2. Social protection and inclusion

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, evaluation, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network), as well as activities of mutual learning, exchange of good practices, technical assistance, meetings and events, IT, trainings, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, and capacity-building. They will also promote dialogue with civil society and stakeholders, support the exchange of social security information and the governance of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness. These activities relate to the social protection and inclusion objectives in the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR).

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

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 and where relevant co-delegations with DG DIGIT

4.3. Labour markets and labour mobility

The actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, transposition checks, policy advice, evaluations, statistics, studies and surveys, expert networks, data collection and availability) as well as activities of mutual-learning, exchange of good practices between competent authorities, technical assistance, meetings and events, communication, dissemination and capacity-building and IT services (including the development and maintenance of the EURES portal and related translations). These activities relate to: (a) employment and labour market developments and policies; (b) equal opportunities and active support to employment objectives in the European Pillar of Social Rights; (c) 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

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, evaluation, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network) as well as activities of data collection and availability, mutual-learning, exchange of good practices between competent authorities, communication, meetings and conferences, dissemination and capacity-building. These activities relate to safe and fair working conditions.

The actions may cover notably the areas of psychosocial risks at work, physical agents, carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic substances at work, labour law, occupational diseases, the impact of the twin transition, exchange and evaluation within Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC), mutual learning and meetings of the Advisory Committee for Health and Safety at Work and international labour standards.

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

Type of contracts

Service

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and where relevant co-delegations with DG DIGIT

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 (including research, policy advice, evaluation, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network) as well as activities of monitoring, data collection and availability, mutual-learning, capacity building, exchange of good practices with third countries (including candidate and potential candidate countries), communication and dissemination activities, meetings and events, horizontal and cross-cutting IT, audits, monitoring, contribution to corporate IT and communication. The actions will cover cross-cutting themes (e.g. several policy areas of DG EMPL or transversal issues like equality).

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 157 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

The ESF+ Regulation (notably Article 5) provides a budget 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.

The transnational cooperation initiative for social innovation 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 2025 the thematic focus should address child poverty and the implementation of the Disability Employment Package;
- 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.

Its main objectives are: (a) 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) more coherent policy regarding social innovation at EU level as well as in the Member States and participating countries. It complements the Member State's activities under the ESF+ in shared management.

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: Analytical work on financing social protection

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The principal aim of this action is to focus on analytical work on financing social protection. This work will build on the outcomes of the OECD Ministerial Summit on Social policies. It will take stock of social protection financing mixes across EU and OECD countries and analyse policy areas exposed to future transformations (such as unemployment insurance, pensions, etc). It will also enable a EU focused analysis with regards to broader sources of financing for social protection (as recommended by the High level group on the future of social protection and of the welfare state in the EU) and the challenges and opportunities in pursuing such financing avenues.

Expected outcomes include: a new methodology to assess financing mixes and the impact of various financing sources on specific branches of social protection; reports and data that will feed into the Commission's and possibly the Social Protection Committee's work.

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 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The OECD has a unique competence and expertise in this area because of its geographical coverage (EU and non-EU relevant countries), its combination of expertises in both social and employment policies as well as economic and fiscal policies (eg OECD's Centre for Tax Policy), its various relevant databases (in particular OECD Tax/Ben model), as well as its on-going broad project on "Future of social protection", which will result in the Social Policies Ministerial meeting in 2025.

5.3. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Monitoring the current and future adequacy of pensions

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The action will provide analytical work to support the preparation of the 2027 Social Protection Committee (SPC) - Commission report on pension adequacy. The objective of the agreement is to review the methodology of the calculation of the Theoretical Replacement Rates (TRRs) and provide detailed instructions and guidelines for the calculation of current and future TRRs that will be used by the Member States. This will underpin analysis of future pension adequacy and the impact of various life events and career scenarios on pension adequacy, as well as analytical support to the Commission and the SPC in the preparation of the report.

The action addresses the following principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights: 15. Old age income and pensions.

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 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The OECD has a unique competence and expertise in the area of social protection, including analysing pension adequacy by using the Theoretical Replacement Rates.

5.4. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Job-to-job transitions and employment outcomes in the context of the green transition: country-specific & econometric analysis

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The principal aim of this action is to broaden and enrich the evidence base and deepen the analytical understanding of employment impacts of the green transition in the EU, including a focus on the industrial sectors, workers, population groups and regions most affected. The action will build on the specific methodological expertise and previous in-depth analysis of the OECD in this field. It will inform relevant policy initiatives and will contribute quantitative results and data for the second monitoring review of the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality, the European Fair Transition Observatory, the European Semester and other policy guidance tools.

Expected outcomes include: (i) acquiring a deeper understanding of employment trajectories of workers in the context of the green transition, with a focus on workers (previously) employed in affected industries (mining and quarrying, manufacturing of automotives, steel, etc.), as well as in vulnerable regions and/or economies; (ii) providing an enhanced evidence basis for policymaking and exchange with stakeholders, with a view to improving the design, implementation and monitoring of employment support measures targeting the workers, population groups, sectors and regions most affected, taking into account social dialogue, collective bargaining and national welfare systems; (iii) identifying further data needs and research gaps for analysing labour market effects and job-to-job transitions in the context of the green transition.

The action addresses many principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

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 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The OECD has a unique competence and expertise in this area because of its geographical coverage (EU and non-EU relevant countries), its combination of expertise in both social and employment analysis and policies (e.g. Employment Outlook 2024), as well as in climate, energy and environmental policies, economic and fiscal policies (e.g. OECD's Centre for Tax Policy), its various relevant databases (e.g. OECD Tax/Ben model), as well as its on-

going work on wellbeing, and its broad project on “Future of social protection”, which will result in the Social Policies Ministerial meeting in 2025.

5.5. Contribution agreement with the WHO: Building more accessible, better quality and resilient long-term care systems through tools and policy advice for the implementation of the Long-Term Care (LTC) Recommendation

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The principal aim of this action is to support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to high-quality long term care.

It will provide country-specific support in areas identified as problematic further to the horizontal assessment of the national implementation measures, evidence-gathering for the planned 2027 joint EC-SPC report (on LTC), and further development and deployment of the State of LTC assessment tool (e.g. to render it applicable at regional level).

The action addresses the following principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights: 18. Long-term care.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the World Health Organization (WHO) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The WHO has unique competence in long-term care and capacity building as demonstrated by its rich policy work and tools in this policy area as well as concrete country projects in some EU Member States (country assessment frameworks and case studies on integrated delivery of care).

5.6. Contribution agreement with the 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 that 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 157 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.

5.7. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Ensuring decent work in global supply chains via due diligence and the promotion of international labour standards

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The objective of the action is to reduce the risk of Human Rights deficiencies in European organisation's global supply chains and promote decent work worldwide by (a) building up the capacity of social partners to engage in meaningful dialogue (b) promoting international core labour standards (c) generating a better understanding of relevant stakeholders of the mandatory due diligence requirements concerning decent work (d) prepare the ground for future constructive policy dialogues on labour standards between developing countries and the EU.

It will support the implementation of the actions envisaged in the Decent Work Communication, including information sharing on a cross-country basis, capacity building of tripartite constituents on the application and implementation of due diligence on decent work and international core labour standards in global supply chains.

This project will support the EU's commitment to responsible global leadership, to the Sustainable Development Goals, and to promoting international labour standards. Addressing several interlinked fields, it supports the principles of the EU Pillar of Social Rights. Particularly, it will contribute to the implementation of EPSR principles 01. Education, training and life-long learning, 02. Gender equality, 03. Equal opportunities, 04. Active support to employment, and 08. 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 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The ILO has a unique competence to deliver this project because it brings together expertise of senior experts in the organisation. The ILO also has a unique tripartite structure with a focus on the social partners. Lastly, the ILO has a long standing experience in project management including in projects on decent work and global supply chains. Its unique tripartite structure allows it to promote dialogue, mutual understanding and convergence of positions among governments, trade unions and employers' associations.

5.8. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Strengthen the occupational safety and health (OSH) and notably the labour inspections in the Mediterranean Region – Phase 3

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. It will build on the results obtained in the pilot action⁹ supported in 2022-2023, the phase II of 2024-2025, and scale-up impact in supporting the Mediterranean region to improve occupational safety and health.

It will include several components: organization of joint conferences and workshops in 2025-2026; research on drivers and constraints for improved OSH outcomes; promotion of ratification of relevant OSH and Labour Inspection Conventions in participating countries and at regional level; activities at the sectors and workplace level to prevent and mitigate OSH risks; expanded use of ILO expertise and knowledge of comparative practice on labour inspections.

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 project will also be promoted in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean sectoral dialogue on employment and labour.

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 157 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 3 of this action.

5.9. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Vision Zero Fund (VZF) on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in Global Supply Chains.

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Protecting the fundamental human right to a safe and healthy workplace is 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 Fundamental Labour Right.

⁹ 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”

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 and workshops, 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, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the recent European Commission strategy for decent work worldwide, as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), embedded health and safety in European and global standards at the workplace.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the ILO on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 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.

6. Contributions to trust funds

N/A

7. Financial instruments

N/A

8. Contributions to blending facilities

N/A

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 in particular in the field of safety and health at work, employment, mobility, social protection and inclusion, 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

To provide services, works and scientific opinions underpinning Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs) to prepare future updates of Directives 98/24/EC (Directive on carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic substances at work) and 2004/37/EC (Chemical Agent Directive). It delivers administrative, technical and scientific support to the Risk Assessment Committee (RAC) to establish the appropriate OELs at European Union level.

Implementation

Service level agreements with ECHA

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

Description and objective of the implementing measure

The actions will notably include thematic analysis on employment and social-related challenges; support the development of indicators and data about access to social protection for workers and self-employed; upgrade and expand the pension modelling tool of the JRC to support better analysis of pension adequacy in the EU; support the delivery and operation of an e-learning platform; pursue work on the Hypothetical Household Tool (HHoT) for potential future use in the European Semester and other benchmarking of social benefit indicators; extending the European survey on work in the twin transition to all Member States; and explore job-to-job transitions and employment outcomes in the context of the green economy.

Implementation

Service level agreements with JRC

9.4. Support to the Centers of Vocational Excellence

Description and objective of the implementing measure

ETF action will focus on the international dimension of vocational excellence, as well as on support for the Centers of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) on national and European levels. This support will include the development of studies, organisation of webinars, creation of networking opportunities and synergies with EU initiatives, among other.

Implementation

Service level agreement with ETF

9.5. Publications

Description and objective of the implementing measure

Conception, printing, storage and distribution of DG EMPL publications in various areas. Subscriptions to publications for training purposes.

Implementation

Co-delegation to OP

9.6. 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