



## **WG employment critical friend review on ‘how can cities tackle the skills mismatch and develop 21st century skills?’**

**13-15 November, Ghent**  
**WG Employment updates**

### **WG EMPLOYMENT UPDATE**

#### **1. Mutual learning on innovative solutions to combat long-term unemployment through social economy in Lille**

On 27-29 May, more than 40 experts from working groups employment, smart social inclusion and entrepreneurship & SMEs met in Lille to learn, transfer and possibly replicate some of the inspiring practices of the host city. Lille Metropole presented its innovative approach of using the social economy as a vehicle for social cohesion. The participants visited the Job Factory (La fabrique de l’emploi), which is part of a national experiment aiming at eliminating long-term unemployment by delivering basic services or goods that people in deprived areas can’t afford and which could be delivered by unemployed people. City experts have also been inspired by three other practices like the Mobility Platform, the Call for social economy projects and Entrepreneurship Factory. Amsterdam, Bristol and Cluj-Napoca had the opportunity to address challenges like how to match the long-term unemployed with the labour market of the future, how to offer support for the long-term unemployed with learning disabilities and how to develop successful models of labour market inclusion of the long-term unemployed from vulnerable communities. Read more [here](#).

#### **2. Cities continue to pledge to the EU Pillar of Social Rights**

After the official launch of the campaign ‘Inclusive cities for all: Social Rights in my city’ in February at the European Parliament, cities continue to pledge to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. Madrid, Lyon, Turku, Lille and Malmö have all pledged on principles related to employment. Find all pledges and learn more about how to pledge [here](#). On 23 October, in Warsaw during the Social Affairs Forum 11 new pledges have been presented, reaching a number of 32 pledges to implement EPSR at local level. Read more [here](#).

#### **3. EURO CITIES report on cities delivering social rights**

EURO CITIES have realised the report ‘European Pillar of Social Rights: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market in cities in Europe’. The key findings of the report are that cities play a key role in the implementation of the EPSR. As the level of government closest to people and the local economy, cities are the first to see that labour markets are changing and inequalities are rapidly increasing. It is now more important than ever to ensure social rights for all people and preserve social cohesion. Most city authorities have competences and even go beyond their legal responsibilities to provide inclusive education, promote gender equality and equal opportunities, and deliver active support for employment. Read the full report [here](#).

### **EU POLICY UPDATES**

#### **4. New European Commission**

In July, following meetings with the new European Parliament, incoming Commission President Ursula von der Leyen released political guidelines for the next European Commission. The document is centred on the following topics:

- A European Green Deal
- An economy that works for people
- A Europe fit for the digital age
- Protecting our European way of life

- A stronger Europe in the world
- A new push for European democracy

From a social policy perspective, the guidelines refer to an action plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, a digital Education Action Plan, a European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme, a European Child Guarantee, a legal instrument for a fair minimum wage and a fair digital tax. In addition, the document puts forward that the European Semester economic policy coordination cycle should go hand in hand with social rights while better integrating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The full political guidelines document is available [here](#).

#### **5. Bratislava to host the European Labour Authority**

On 13 June, the Council of the EU selected Bratislava to host the seat of the future of the European Labour Authority. The Council also adopted the founding regulation of the European Labour Authority. It will support compliance and coordination of states on issues related to labour mobility, social security coordination and undeclared work. The ELA will also be responsible for providing information to employers and individuals in cross-border mobility situation. It is expected to start functioning at the end of this year and be fully operational by 2023 with an annual budget of around €50 million. Read more [here](#) and consult the new website [here](#).

#### **6. Better work-life balance for parents and carers in the EU: Council adopts new rules**

On 13 June, the council adopted the Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers. This legislation will contribute to improving the participation of women in the labour market, notably through flexible working arrangements, paternity leave for the second parent (10 working days minimum) as well as parental leave (4 months). Workers will also be granted the possibility to take leave to care for relatives in need of support. Read more [here](#)

#### **7. Better working conditions in the EU: Council adopts a directive on more transparency and predictability at work**

On 13 June, the Council adopted the directive improving predictability and transparency of working conditions in Europe. The legislation will improve information provided to workers and aims at responding to challenges such as demographic changes, digitalisation or new forms of work. It also sets minimum rights such as the possibility to take up a job in parallel, a limitation of the probationary period to 6 months and the right to free training. Read more [here](#).

#### **8. Closing the gender pay gap: Council conclusions**

On 13 June, the Council adopted conclusions on measures to close the gender-pay gap. Besides recognising equality between men and women as a fundamental principle of the EU, these conclusions incentivise states to improve existing measures or create new ones to ensure equal pay for work of equal value, promoting equality in education and ensure compatibility of work, family and private life for men and women. Read more [here](#).

#### **9. New forms of work: Council conclusions**

On 13 June, the Council adopted conclusions on new forms of work. The document focus on health and safety in a context of increasing digitalisation, robotization, use of artificial intelligence and of digital platforms. While recognising their contribution to social inclusion, the conclusion highlights the challenges these new forms of work represent for traditional work arrangements and protection of workers. Read more [here](#).

#### **Upcoming meetings and activities:**

- **OECD Local Development Forum in Antwerp 10-11 December**  
This December we are joining forces with OECD! Save the date for the annual OECD

Local Development forum in Antwerp on 10-11 December. The forum will focus on 'Right skills, Right Jobs, Right Places', addressing skills mismatch, how to equip people with the right skills and successfully engaging disadvantage groups so that they can contribute to local labour markets. More information [here](#).

- **European Commission consultation on the European Social Fund in the 2014-2018 programming period, deadline to complete is 19 December.**

EC has launched a 12-week public consultation to evaluate the support to social inclusion by the ESF. The consultation is available online in all official languages of the EU. The information collected will be used in assessing what has been achieved during the 2014-2018 programming period. It will also help the Commission draw lessons on how to reinforce this support in the future, making it more effective and focused. We invite our members to contribute to this consultation. Find all the information [here](#).



*This update has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>*