

EU Sectoral Social Dialogue for temporary agency work

Work Programme 2021 – 2023

1. Theme of the Work Programme 2021 - 2023

The EU Sectoral Social Partners for temporary agency work, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa, agreed on the theme of PARTNERS for their Work Programme 2021 - 2023. Partners stands for 8 main themes:

P: Platform work, digital transformation, artificial intelligence and the changing world of work

A: Apprenticeships, dual learning and the European Skills Agenda

R: Regulation, the review of the regulatory framework on temporary agency work (review of restrictions and fact-finding on cross-border temporary agency work) and the benefits of diverse forms of work

T: Trust and confidence in working together through best-practice sharing

N: New normal – The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the temporary agency work industry, digital transformation and the allocation role of temporary agency work

E: Employment Policies, including a focus on activation, labour market transitions, public-private partnerships and policies to tackle undeclared work

R: The role of sectoral social partners, connecting European and national debates and capacity building

S: Social Innovation, new ways of working, learning and social protection

2. Platform work, digital transformation, artificial intelligence and the changing world of work

In 2017/2018, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa conducted a strategic project on "Online talent platforms, labour market intermediaries and the changing world of work"¹. Since then, the discussions on the role of online talent platforms have advanced and the current European Commission announced to come up with a legislative proposal on improving working conditions for platform workers. The World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa aim to contribute to the debate on the role of online talent platforms, which could include the following main actions:

¹ The results of the project are available on the [World Employment Confederation-Europe website](https://www.wecglobal.org)

- To hold a debate on the role of online talent platforms in the context of the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue and based on the EU Social Partners' Consultations launched in 2021. Furthermore, sectoral social partners intend to follow the legislative initiative to be launched by the European Commission at the end of 2021. Depending on the Commission consultation and legislative initiative, this could include the dimension of the use of artificial intelligence on the labour market.
- To review the 2018 Joint Recommendations on "Online talent platforms, labour market intermediaries and the changing world of work" and to consider an update of the Joint Recommendations based on the current political debate on online talent platforms at EU level.

3. Apprenticeships, dual learning and the EU Skills Agenda

Skills, apprenticeships and dual learning are of particular importance in the current economic and social context of the Covid-19 pandemic and for driving the economic and social recovery. This has been highlighted in the recently completed Joint Project on "Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry" and in the Joint Recommendations of the sectoral social partners for temporary agency work on the Covid-19 pandemic of April 2020.²

The European Commission European Skills Agenda of 2020 recognises the role of the private employment services industry and puts a strong focus on apprenticeships, dual learning and on the cooperation of the different actors on the labour market.

The World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa aim to take the following actions with regard to apprenticeships, dual learning and the European Skills Agenda

- To hold a series of national presentations on apprenticeships, dual learning and skills, showcasing and to discuss practices developed in several European countries and to discuss the socially innovative character of the training and upskilling initiatives that are implemented in the temporary agency work industry.
- To hold an exchange with the European Commission/DG Employment on the involvement of the temporary agency work industry in concrete projects of the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.³

4. Regulation, review of the regulatory framework and the benefits of diverse forms of work

The World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa support appropriate regulation on temporary agency work which balances flexibility and security and value the benefits of diverse forms work to support participation, integration and inclusion in the labour market.

Based on the EU Directive on temporary agency work, regulation should be appropriate and restrictions on temporary agency work may only be justified based on reasons linked to the protection of temporary agency workers, the well-functioning of the labour market and the prevention of abuses. At the same time and equally important, the Directive on temporary agency work provides for adequate protection of temporary agency

² These recent EU Sectoral Social Dialogue outcomes are available on the World Employment Confederation-Europe website: [Social Dialogue - World Employment Confederation Europe \(weceurope.org\)](https://www.weceurope.org/social-dialogue-world-employment-confederation-europe)

³ The European Skills Agenda is available [here](#).

workers based on the principle of equal treatment, including the options of derogations by collective labour agreements, agreements of social partners and for open-ended contracts providing pay between assignments⁴.

Between 2021 and 2023, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa aim to focus on the following actions:

- To hold a discussion or thematic workshop in the context of one of the sectoral social dialogue committee meetings on the Directive on temporary agency work, its implementation into national law and its appropriateness as common, European framework to regulate temporary agency work. This discussion should include the application and enforcement of the principle of equal treatment, as well as the conditions and restrictions on temporary agency work that are established at national level and whether these are justified. Starting point should be the joint declaration signed by the sectoral social partners for temporary agency work in 2008 on the Directive on temporary agency work.⁵
- To contribute jointly to any assessment by the European Commission services on the Directive on temporary agency work. The social dialogue committee will participate in any impact assessment or dedicated consultation regarding this topic.
- To monitor the impact of recent cases at the EU Court of Justice on the Directive on temporary agency work and to assess jointly their impact on agency work regulation.

5. Trust and confidence in working together through best-practice sharing

The sectoral social partners aim to use the sectoral social dialogue committee meeting to build trust and confidence in working together as partners through the exchange of best-practices. The best-practice exchange can cover national presentations on the topics covered in this work programme, the exchange on new initiative in the area of employment policies, skills and social innovation and initiatives to address and fight the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. New normal – the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the temporary agency work industry

The Covid-19 pandemic is having a major impact on the economies, societies and labour markets in Europe, including the temporary agency work sectors. Protecting workers, safeguarding work and preparing for an economic and social recovery are key priorities on the EU employment and social policy agenda, as well as on the agenda of EU Member States.

Sectoral Social Partners have played an important role in 2020 and 2021 to support workers in the current crisis, to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and to ensure the continuity of employment. The temporary agency work industry has also fulfilled an important reallocation role, supporting temporary agency workers to move from declining to rising sectors.

Between 2021 and 2023, the sectoral social partners for temporary agency work will consider taking the following actions on Covid-19 and the recovery:

⁴ See also Article 4 and 5 of the Directive on temporary agency work.

⁵ The joint declaration is available on the European Commission [website](#).

- To have a regular exchange on the national and EU policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic with regard to its employment and social policy dimension, looking at containment, protection of workers, the allocation role and the recovery. This discussion could for example take the form of strategic, online workshop of the sectoral social partners for temporary agency work held in the context of a sectoral social dialogue committee meeting.
- To review at the end of 2021 the Joint Recommendations signed in 2020 on "Covid-19: Protecting workers, safeguarding work and preparing for the economic and social recovery"⁶ to assess, whether these joint recommendations require an update in the light of new phases of the Covid-19 crisis.

7. Employment Policies

In 2021/2022, the sectoral social partners for temporary agency work aim to continue contributing to EU employment policy debates with a focus on labour market transitions, activation, active labour market policies, skills and training and the prevention of undeclared work.

Between 2021 and 2023, the following main actions will be taken:

- A thematic session will be held in 2021 or early 2022 as part of one of the sectoral social dialogue committee meetings on the role of the temporary agency work industry in activation, active labour market policies, transitions and integration into the labour market. This thematic session should include a setting the scene presentation by the European Commission/DG Employment, two to three national case studies from World Employment Confederation-Europe members and UNI-Europa affiliates and a discussion. Input for this discussion will also be provided by the WEC-Europe Head Office and UNI-Europa Secretariat.
- Based on the thematic session, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa will consider adopting joint recommendations on the topic of activation, transitions and cooperation between public and private employment services.

8. Role of social partners and capacity building

Between 2021 and 2023, the sectoral social partners for temporary agency work aim to conduct a joint project focused on capacity building and best-practice exchange among the World Employment Confederation-Europe members and UNI-Europa affiliates. To facilitate this capacity building project, the sectoral social partners aim to submit a project proposal to the European Commission under the 2021 or 2022 call for proposals "Support of the Social Dialogue".

The project will have a duration of 18 months and include the following main dimensions:

- The launch of a call for tender and the selection of a project partner to implement the capacity building and best-practice sharing activities
- A capacity building workshop on developing and strengthening employers' organisations and trade unions in central and eastern Europe and have discussions on appropriate temporary agency work regulation. This workshop will build on early capacity building workshops run in region in cooperation

⁶ The joint recommendations on Covid-19 are available on the World Employment Confederation-Europe [website](#)

with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation. In following up on the workshop, a short guide with recommendations on strengthening employers' organisations and trade unions shall be produced.

- A capacity building workshop focused on new solutions for social protection shall be organised with a strong involvement of World Employment Confederation-Europe members and UNI-Europa affiliates from western and northern Europe. The workshop will aim to follow-up on the 2019/2020 project on social innovation and come up with a short guide on the key success factors and recommendations for developing new solutions in the area of social protection.
- A capacity building workshop focused on skills enhancement, apprenticeships and training including experts from southern and western Europe. The main aim of the workshop is to develop practical guidance for strengthening training and skills policies in the temporary agency work industry, the main instruments and tools need to do so and the success factors.

The capacity building and guidance to be developed shall be instrumental for the World Employment Confederation-Europe members and the UNI-Europa affiliates in becoming stronger while respecting the national diversity of sectoral social dialogue. At the same time, the project aims to also get inspiration from other services sectors and share the lessons learned among the services sectors social partners.

9. Social Innovation

In 2019/2020, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa conducted a successful, joint project on Social Innovation. This project looked at new solutions for working, learning and social protection to the benefits of workers, companies and society at large. It resulted in a series of three thematic workshop, a pan-European Conference in December 2020 and a research report with a compendium of Social Innovation Practices.

Social Innovation remains an important topic for discussion among the European sectoral social partners for temporary agency work between 2021 and 2023. As also highlighted in their Joint Recommendations of 2020, Social Innovation can be an important instrument to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Europe. In the coming three years, the EU Sectoral Social Partners for temporary agency work aim to take the following actions:

- To implement joint (virtual) meetings with EU policymakers and stakeholders to present the joint research and to discuss social innovation practices
- To use the sectoral social dialogue committee meetings when there are new initiatives or collective labour agreements signed by national sectoral social partners for temporary agency work, which implement or foster new solutions for working, learning or social protection.

10. Review clause

The Sectoral Social Dialogue Work Programme was adopted by the Sectoral Social Partners on 31 May 2021. It shall be reviewed in Q3/2022 to consider adaptations and amendments.

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