

FINAL REPORT

**CAPACITY BUILDING
IN THE TEMPORARY
AGENCY WORK SECTOR**

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INTRODUCTION: AIMS, METHODOLOGY, AND CONTEXT

The 'Capacity Building in the Temporary Agency Work Sector' project is an EU-funded initiative of the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI Europa, in the context of their work programme for European sectoral social dialogue for Temporary Agency Work (TAW). The initiative builds on the 2019 joint project 'Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry'¹ and on the 2022 joint recommendations laid out in the 'Towards More Dynamic, Inclusive and Resilient Labour Markets' report of February 2022².

The 'Capacity Building in the Temporary Agency Work Sector' project aims to reinforce the capacity of national sectoral social partners to engage in national social dialogue, particularly in those Member States where social dialogue is underdeveloped. As part of this, good-practice exchanges, mutual learning opportunities and concrete guidance will focus on enhancing the impact of sectoral social partners in the following priority areas:

- **Training and skills** - Reviewing new approaches to training and reskilling programmes.
- **Working conditions** - Shaping proportionate regulation for the agency work sector.
- **Social protection** - Articulating innovative solutions in the area social protection.

In addition to addressing specific capacity-building needs in the temporary agency sector, the ambition has been to fuel discussion and reflection on the pivotal role that the sectoral social partners play within the context of job matching, skills assessment, policy formation and overall labour market resilience. The aim of this final report is to capture examples of transferable good practice from across participating countries, propose solutions to latent barriers, and outline targeted guidance for social partners on making progress on the three cross-cutting themes.

In terms of methodology, the project followed a three-step approach, featuring an online survey of participating European social partners, in-depth one-on-one interviews and three in-person events, namely two regional workshops in Milan and Warsaw and a final conference in Brussels. The workshops brought together over 50 representatives from the staffing industry, employers federations and trade unions, with delegations from a wide range of European countries, including Finland, France, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Switzerland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Denmark and Norway. The aim throughout the project has been to identify common challenges as well as innovative solutions and transferable good practice examples.

1. The final report is accessible here: https://www.uni-europa.org/old-uploads/2020/12/CEPS-HIVA_Social-Innovation_Final-Edited-version.pdf

2. The joint recommendations are available at: [2022-02-02_WEC-Europe-UNI-Europa-jointrecommendations-inclusive-labour-markets-post-recovery.pdf](#) (weceurope.org)

Discussions around skills, employment and working conditions must be considered within the context of a shape-shifting world of work, new approaches to hiring and evolving worker needs and expectations. Below is a snapshot of recent developments, research on emerging workforce trends and drivers of future change that provide useful context around the project's core themes:

- **Workforce issues are a top priority for employers** – A recent PWC survey shows that skills and workforce issues are among the top concerns for CEOs worldwide³. Similarly, 78% of Deloitte survey respondents flagged skills and talent availability as major organisational risks⁴. This opens the door to new and innovative approaches.
- **Speed and agility are increasingly essential** – With business cycles accelerating, leaders are prioritising speed and agility across their operations. According to PwC, 42% of CEOs fear their company may not survive the next 10 years without significant transformation.
- **Agency work can meet evolving needs of workers and employers** – WEC's study *The Work We Want*⁵ shows growing interest in flexible work models. 29% of workers emphasise less long-term employment within a single organisation, while 24% of employers plan to increase their use of agency work to boost agility and access to talent.

- **Review of hiring practices** – Employers are rethinking recruitment processes, criteria, and channels— affecting both temporary and permanent roles— according to The Work We Want study.
- **Social dialogue is a driver of positive change** – The latest ILO Social Dialogue Report underscores the role of social dialogue in navigating digital and green transitions, restoring social trust, and reducing labour market inequalities during structural change⁶.
- **Boosting social partner capacity is essential** – Enhancing the capacity and representativeness of social partners is key to addressing the diverse needs of workers and employees, according to the ILO report. Currently, 50% of social partners have concerns with regards to social dialogue outcomes being translated into policy and regulatory action, highlighting the need to improve advocacy impact and relationship-building skills.

This data underlines messages relevant to the current project. Positive change within the TAW sector must involve buy-in from the end-user employers manage workers day-to-day management. The growing recognition among senior staff of skills and workforce issues is a big step forward. Likewise, the demand for greater speed and agility underscores the need for a well-managed and effectively regulated TAW sector. The project's focus on building social partner capacity is especially timely, supporting cooperation with national governments to shape labour market policies that reflect and pre-empt shifts in the world of work.

3. The annual PWC Global CEO Survey is available at: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2025/28th-ceo-survey.pdf>

4. The Deloitte 'Time to Rethink Talent in the Boardroom' report can be accessed here:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/leadership/prioritizing-workforce-issues-in-the-boardroom.html>

5. The World Employment Confederation (WEC) 'The Work We Want' research can be accessed at the following link: <https://insights.wecglobal.org/the-work-we-want/home/>

6. The ILO's 2024 Social Dialogue Report can be accessed here:

<https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/social-dialogue-report-2024-peak-level-social-dialogue-economic-development>

TRAINING AND RESKILLING: KEY FINDINGS

There are several common challenges linked to skills and training within the agency work sector. Discussions between social partners were an opportunity to build consensus on priority issues, identify potential solutions and learn from innovative professional training initiatives across Europe.

TRAINING AND RESKILLING IN CONTEXT: BUILDING ON THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED

Temporary agency work has been perceived as facing challenges in offering training and skills development to workers. However, recent data challenges this perception. A 2024 survey⁷ conducted by the French Observatory for Agency Work and Recruitment (OIR), led by social partners, showed that 78% of temporary workers had received some training. In 2023 alone, France's bipartite training fund delivered nearly 292,000 training courses to agency workers. Similarly, Italy's bipartite training fund Formatemp supported training and re-training courses for 285,000 individuals.

In healthcare, regular training is already embedded due to regulatory requirements. The aim now is to expand and strengthen these efforts—ensuring that more workers, regardless of contract type, have access to high-quality training. The varied experience gained through different assignments can itself be a form of professional development. The opportunity ahead is to

boost training and reskilling for all workers – irrespective of what type of contract they are on.

In contrast to other flexible forms of employment, such as freelancing or platform work, agency workers benefit from access to professional training through bipartite funds established by sectoral social partners in different EU countries. These funds are vital for upskilling and re-skilling, particularly for individuals entering the labour market without formal qualifications. They also enable partnerships with institutions supporting specific groups, such as the long-term unemployed or migrant workers—e.g. public employment services, NGOs, and community organisations. There is a significant imbalance in many countries between funds allocated to initial skilling initiatives and those allocated to reskilling programmes. As AI and technological change reshape job roles, boosting training and reskilling opportunities for all workers is more critical than ever.



7. Survey *Regards croisés sur l'intérim* – Juillet 2024 – OIR – France
<https://observatoire-inerim-recrutement.fr/files/2024-09/regards-croises-2024-image-et-parcours.pdf>

CREATING BESPOKE SUPPORT FOR TARGET GROUPS IS AN ONGOING PRIORITY

Bespoke support for specific target groups remains a key priority in the TAW sector. These groups include NEETS, the long-term unemployed, young people without qualifications, migrant workers, and older workers re-entering the labour market. Supporting these individuals requires targeted coaching and a deep understanding of personal circumstances, including challenges linked to accommodation, transport, caregiving responsibilities, family circumstances, and substance abuse.

A practical example comes from the French bipartite social protection fund Fastt, which supports agency workers beyond the workplace by offering loans, insurance, childcare, transport, and housing assistance. In 2024 alone, Fastt supported over 50,000 housing dossiers and facilitated 4,000 rental contracts for agency workers. In the Netherlands, social partners introduced a Collective Labour Agreement (CLA) on the Price Quality System Housing (PKS), guaranteeing fair housing conditions costs to migrant agency workers.

Most countries are focusing on similar target groups in terms of employability and reskilling support - for example, initiatives aimed at facilitating career transitions for older workers and at addressing language barriers for refugees. This 'communality' of priority issues accentuates the benefits of creating platforms for ongoing exchanges. One recurring message is that boosting confidence and self-awareness is just as important as boosting technical skills.

Improving guidance and support for target groups also helps boost confidence and job readiness. One example is the *Tremplin* initiative in France supported by the Professional Fund for Employment in Temporary Work (FPE-TT). It builds confidence among disadvantaged youth by encouraging them to develop their creative skills, such as graffiti art, as a stepping stone to employment. It is also important to guide end-user employers. GI Group's *Form.Integra* initiative, supports inclusive hiring by helping end-user employers recruit and integrate refugees and migrant workers.

Early-stage support and guidance provisions are key to helping individuals access and complete training and reskilling programmes. Raising awareness from the outset aids jobseekers better understand evolving labour market trends, and the skills needed to access available jobs (and to subsequently progress in specific sectors). Targeted coaching—delivered by work coaches or agency consultants—is more important than ever as jobseekers navigate an increasingly complex and fast-changing employment landscape. A strong example is the *Welqome* initiative run by Travi, Belgium's bipartite training fund, which supports young jobseekers in building networks, developing soft skills, and identifying opportunities within the TAW sector.

An important success factor is ensuring that work coaches and recruitment professionals have the necessary knowledge and awareness, communication and engagement skills needed to deliver the best possible guidance. This is one area where national recruitment federations within WEC-Europe can continue to play a leading role.

CASE STUDY: Supporting Young Jobseekers through the Welqome Initiative (Belgium)

The *Welqome* Initiative is delivered by Travi, Belgium's bipartite training fund for temporary workers, with support from the Federal Government. Funded by the sector and underpinned by a collective agreement, its core aim is to equip work coaches and agency consultants to better guide young people (up to age 26) through the complexities of the labour market.

Key activities include:

Networking: Establishing a local network that connects temporary work agencies and organisations supporting young people.

Welqome Day: A dedicated day offering targeted support, including soft skills workshops in the morning, followed by guaranteed interviews with agencies in the afternoon.

Training: Securing additional funds to provide targeted training to young jobseekers.

This approach combines individual coaching with practical opportunities, helping young people build confidence, skills, and direct links to employment.

CASE STUDY: Supporting Worker Integration through the Form.Integra Initiative (Italy)

The *Form.Integra* initiative, was established through a sectoral collective agreement (CLA) signed by the Italian federation of agency work companies (Assolavoro) and the sectoral trade unions (NidiL Cgil, Felsa Cisl, UILTemp UIL). It supports the integration of refugees and migrant workers while helping client companies adopt more inclusive hiring practices. The initiative addresses common concerns around language barriers and cultural integration by combining targeted training with structured support.

Core components of the Form.Integra initiative include:

- Partnerships and capacity building: Agencies like the Gi Group Foundation partners with third-sector organisations ensures that frontline staff are trained to conduct prequalification activities.
- Sourcing and selection: In the case of Gi Group with support from Gi Ricolloca, a unit specialised in active employment policies, qualification criteria are defined together with partners, and candidate selection is managed accordingly.
- Targeted training: Tailored training pathways—covering language and technical skills—are designed in partnership with employers, once training providers and funding sources are secured.
- Workplace support: Participants receive personalised integration support, including access to cultural mediators to ease their transition into the workplace.

CASE STUDY: Employability Support through the Tremplin Initiative (France)

The *Tremplin initiative* offers intensive five-day coaching programmes tailored to the needs of specific target groups. The aim is to build jobseekers' self-confidence, enhance their skills, prepare them for recruitment interviews, and connect them with employment agencies. A unique feature of the programme is its emphasis on helping participants recognise and build on their existing talents as a pathway to confidence and employability.

Target groups include young unemployed people without qualifications, older jobseekers (50+), and recipients of minimum social income (RSA). The 5-day programme is funded by the bipartite Professional Fund for Employment in Temporary Work (FPETT), first created in 1996 with the support of the social partners in the temporary work sector.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES IS A VITAL STARTING POINT

Skills assessment is a vital component of many training initiatives. It helps take stock of an individual's existing competencies, identifies gaps to be addressed, and guides participants toward appropriate training and better job outcomes. Creating a personal profile and skills development plan is an essential step in tailoring support to each participant's needs and securing best possible job outcomes.

In Italy, the Welcome & Work initiative includes a bespoke Skills Assessment (BdC) tool which maps each participant's current skillset. This is especially valuable for migrants whose qualifications may not align with local accreditation systems. This process helps gauge language skills and direct participants to relevant language training.

Skills assessments are equally important for individuals making career transitions or re-entering the labour market after illness or injury. In France, the Contrat

d'Alternance et de Reconversion (CAR) initiative supports temporary workers recovering from occupational accident or illness. It combines a personalised career transition assessment with a retraining contract, helping participants to reintegrate into the workforce.

Skills assessments are expanding beyond technical competencies to include soft skills, which are vital across all sectors. A leading example is TestYourSelfie, a pioneering initiative by Travi in Belgium. Originally launched in 2017, the tool helps jobseekers identify and build key soft skills while boosting confidence and self-awareness, critical for taking initial steps into the labour market. Its methodology has since been adopted in other European countries. One ongoing priority has been to ensure that the tool is positioned and communicated in a way that appeals to target audiences, especially younger workers and jobseekers.

CASE STUDY: Reskilling for Victims of Work Accidents or Occupational Illness (France)

The *Contrat d'Alternance et de Reconversion* (CAR) initiative, launched in 2023 and financed by France's Professional Fund for Employment in Temporary Work (FPETT), supports temporary workers recovering from workplace accidents or occupational illness. The initiative consists of two core elements:

- A career transition assessment providing temporary employees who have suffered industrial accidents an opportunity to reflect on future career options and define clear career transition plans.
- Combined work and training contract offering a pathway to enhance existing skills or gain a new qualification or certification.

Individuals are supported by specialised counsellors who secure access to funding and align the training with employment opportunities. The 12-month contract includes alternating periods of training and temporary assignments. At least one-third of the duration is spent in work placements to apply newly acquired skills.

CASE STUDY: Assessing and Addressing Literacy and Language Challenges through the Dutch Language Budget (Netherlands)

The *Dutch Language Budget* initiative, launched in 2023, aims to improve employability and access to employment opportunities for refugees and temporary agency workers with low literacy levels. The programme provides up to €1,500 per participant for language training or literacy support, helping individuals acquire the skills needed to secure employment and work safely.

Administered by *Doorzaam*—the bipartite training and development fund for the temporary agency sector—the funding supports both refugees and other workers whose limited reading and writing skills constitute a barrier to employment. In 2022, the initiative supported 1,218 jobseekers, rising to 1,996 in 2023, highlighting the growing demand for targeted language and literacy interventions.

IT IS TIME TO REIMAGINE TRAINING DELIVERY AND CONTENT AS WELL AS FUNDING MECHANISMS

The need to revamp the structure and delivery of training programmes is a recurring theme. A key step in understanding what motivates individuals to engage and complete training is by listening to workers' evolving expectations and tailoring programmes accordingly. Keeping participants motivated is critical. As only a small portion of training content, often just 10%, is retained, making harnessing new learning pathways and methodologies even more important.

To be effective, training must reflect the evolving expectations and needs of young people who are often the target audience. Traditional onsite training and top-down learning approaches are giving way to peer-to-peer exchanges, virtual sessions, immersive learning, and collaborative formats.

This shift is central to the Travi initiative in Belgium, promoting innovation in training delivery. In France, the Fregate initiative—funded by the Professional Fund for Employment in Temporary Work (FPE-TT)—aimed at developing transferable skills. Its approach centres on unlocking individual potential and boosting engagement, motivation, and commitment, all key factors in ensuring participants complete their training. There is broad agreement that practical, on-the-job training is becoming increasingly important for technology adoption, especially as an alternative to traditional classroom-based learning. This is particularly relevant in the

TAW sector, where many workers are young, have limited experience, and have evolving expectations.

Training initiatives can target both unemployed individuals and those already working through temporary agencies. In many countries (e.g., France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands), these efforts are supported through bipartite sectoral training funds. In some cases, the public employment systems complement these efforts—such as France's Préparation Opérationnelle à l'Emploi Collective (POEC)—and in others it is regional initiatives, often supported by the European Social Fund. Agile and flexible funding models are a top priority, as the world of work and skills needs continue to change rapidly. Where bipartite funds are not available, partnerships with regional or local actors and the use of EU social funds can help fill the gap.

The starting point for reskilling and employability interventions is understanding where the jobs are. The involvement of employers is vital here in terms of identifying current and future skills needs. A key area of discussion is the quality of trainers and their ability to engage participants. This calls for strong 'train-the-trainer' programmes and the involvement of leading field experts. Another emerging priority is the provision of social and pastoral support during training, particularly in response to rising awareness about wellbeing and mental health challenges.



CASE STUDY: Developing Transferable Skills through the Fregate Initiative (France)

The Fregate initiative in France explores innovative, learner-centred approaches to training, particularly for young people who are often ill at ease in traditional, top-down or onsite formats. Funded by the Professional Fund for Employment in Temporary Work (FPETT), Fregate instead focuses on developing transferable skills while maintaining strong participant engagement. Recognising that top-down, theory-heavy models are no longer effective, the initiative experiments with more dynamic and accessible learning formats such as immersive experiences, virtual sessions, collaborative learning, and social media tools.

Key elements of the Fregate development offer include:

- Immersive experiences far removed from workers' day-to-day lives and their jobs.
- Alternative training locations to enhance learning quality and engagement.
- Supervision by professionals who offer fresh, complementary insights.
- A strong collective dynamic, including regular exchanges and mutual support.
- New training rhythm that favours skills development and experimentation.
- Personal development focus, helping participants recognise their own potential.
- Assessment of cross-disciplinary skills, in conjunction with the vocational training partners.

CASE STUDY: Boosting Integration and Progression Opportunities Through the 'Préparation Opérationnelle à L'Emploi Collective' Initiative (France)

The Préparation Opérationnelle à l'Emploi Collective (POEC) initiative supports young unemployed individuals (under 26) registered with the French Public Employment Service. The goal is to help participants gain a first qualification or progress to a higher one.

What makes POEC innovative is its co-financing model, involving the French Public Employment Service and the sectoral bipartite training fund. While the PES covers unemployment benefits during the training period, the sectoral bipartite fund finances the training costs. Additional support is provided through France's Skills Investment Plan (PIC), which channels government funding into sectoral funds to support training and upskilling opportunities.

Key features of the POEC programme include:

- Small group training (8-10 participants) organised regionally
- Training aligned with current skills and labour market needs, based on input from agencies and social partners
- Job-specific training in roles with known labour shortages, as determined by the social partners, such as truck drivers, passenger transport operators, warehouse order pickers, logistics agents, and manufacturing workers
- Programmes lasting up to 400 hours, with jobseekers receiving unemployment benefits throughout (subject to attendance)
- A job placement guarantee, with agencies required to offer a minimum 6-month contract in the acquired qualification after completion

In 2022, 14,500 individuals participated in POEC programmes.

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE SUSTAINABLE AND INCREMENTAL PROGRESS

Bipartite initiatives play a crucial role in engaging all stakeholders to address the barriers faced by specific target groups (NEETs, long-term unemployed individuals, migrants, and refugees) who require additional support to integrate into the labour market and develop in-demand skills. This is important in preventing further marginalisation in all industries. Examples of partnerships in action include the agency work sector linking up with employers in sectors demanding highly technical skills (see the case study of the Adecco Watch Academy in Switzerland below).

Sustainable progress in this area depends on active engagement at national and local levels. Sector representatives need to engage with organisations supporting disadvantaged groups, building trust and long-term relationships while recognising each party's remit, culture, and operating procedures. One way forward is to start small, scaling up once different approaches have been tested and experimented with. Examples of this include training and reskilling programmes being tested in a specific locality before being rolled out within other regions and municipalities.

CASE STUDY: Providing In-Demand Technical Skills and Immersive Training through the Adecco Watch Academy (Switzerland)

The Adecco Watch Academy (AWA) offers participants an opportunity to acquire highly specialised skills in the traditional Swiss craft of watchmaking. Delivered by expert craftsmen, the programme creates a hands-on, immersive learning environment. The training consists of 72 hours over 9 days, spread across 4 consecutive weeks, and is designed to be intensive and practical. Key learning components include mastering technical watchmaking skills; handling specialised tools and instruments; and acquiring sector-specific technical language.

This initiative not only opens up career paths for jobseekers but also helps address the sector's recruitment needs by building a new talent pipeline for the watchmaking industry. Participants experience an immediate sense of purpose, as the training is structured in a way that enables them to make tangible contributions from day one. The cost of the programme is 3,000 CHF (approximately €3,200), with funding provided through Temptraining, the dedicated training fund for temporary agency workers in Switzerland.

DRIVING RECRUITMENT SKILLS AND HIRING INNOVATION—BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CHANGE

Navigating today's dynamic and unpredictable jobs market is a complex task, particularly for young and relatively inexperienced recruitment consultants engaging with senior professionals undergoing career transitions or supporting refugees facing major life changes. This highlights the persistent need to strengthen the skills, capabilities, and expertise of employment and recruitment professionals. A strong example of progress in this area comes from the Employment and Recruitment Federation (ERF) in Ireland, which has taken the lead in promoting training, upskilling, and professional standards within the agency work sector (see case study below).

There is also growing recognition that outdated hiring procedures and rigid expectations need to change. Many employers still assume that temporary agency

workers will arrive fully trained and ready to hit the ground running. The sector is now working to shift this mindset: while agency workers can contribute from day one, they also require targeted training and support to fully develop their potential over time.

WEC's report *The Work We Want* reinforces this message, noting that traditional talent planning models are no longer fit for purpose. As employers adapt to labour shortages and evolving hiring challenges, they are increasingly focusing on under-represented groups, opening up new opportunities through inclusive recruitment and active labour market participation strategies. For organisations supporting labour market integration, keeping pace with shifting recruitment dynamics at the enterprise level is essential to ensure effective and inclusive support for all jobseekers.

CASE STUDY – Investing in Internal Upskilling within the Agency Work Sector (Ireland)

The Employment and Recruitment Federation (ERF) is the representative body for recruitment agencies in Ireland and places an emphasis on professional development within the agency work sector itself. In partnership with Skillnet Ireland—a government agency dedicated to enhancing business competitiveness and workforce innovation—ERF has developed a structured programme focused on training and upskilling recruitment professionals.

The ERF has also developed its own Certificate in Recruitment Practices as a means of enhancing knowledge and capability and embedding uniform standards. This is not only open to those already working in recruitment and staffing but also serves as a stepping-stone into the sector for individuals interested in entering the profession.

Course modules and assessments cover the recruitment process, client and candidate management, interviewing skills, and compliance with regulations and codes of practice. Certified individuals may use the 'ERF CertRP' title, helping employers and jobseekers identify qualified professionals. The ERF has also launched a 3-year bachelor's degree with the National College of Ireland, open to both recruitment professionals and those in end-user organisations, including the armed forces, government bodies, multinationals, and SMEs.

To date, Skillnet courses have trained over 2,800 learners (from entry level to C-suite level), with 2,113 earning the Certificate in Recruitment Practice and 51 completing the graduate degree since its 2020 launch (another 61 are currently enrolled). The ERF continues to lead the development of a structured academic career path for the sector, with a Master's Programme as the next milestone.

WORKING CONDITIONS: KEY FINDINGS

Establishing effective regulatory frameworks for temporary agency work has long been a priority at both national and EU levels. Social partners must make sure that working conditions are regularly reviewed and that regulatory evolutions remain workable, proportionate and effectively enforced in the interests of workers and compliant businesses.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN CONTEXT: EFFECTIVE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS BENEFIT ALL PARTIES

While past regulatory efforts focused on restricting the use of temporary agency work through limits on assignment duration, rules around reasons for use or sectoral restrictions, there is now a continuous discussion between social partners on creating a regulatory framework on creating a regulatory framework which enhances the working conditions and experience of temporary agency workers, while also enabling them to make a positive impact within end user companies and boost productivity.

Across the EU, temporary agency workers benefit from protections laid out in the Directive on Temporary Agency Work⁸, setting out rights related to equal treatment, non-discrimination, access to amenities and services, information about vacancies and access to training. It aims to ensure that temporary agency workers are treated fairly and have access to the same rights and benefits as other employees.

The Directive also urges Member States to review and justify any restrictions on temporary agency work. Under Article 4, such restrictions must be justified—for example, by reference to protecting workers, safeguarding health and safety, or ensuring a well-functioning labour market free from abuse. In many cases, collective

labour agreements (CLAs) further reinforce these protections by setting minimum standards for pay, working hours, and other employment conditions.

Discussions on working conditions in the TAW sector frequently highlight the importance of targeted health and safety measures and equal treatment for temporary staff. The nature of temporary assignments, arranged at short notice to address immediate workforce gaps, raises challenges linked to ensuring adequate onboarding, ongoing safety awareness, and clarifying the duty of care shared between the agency and the end-user client. There is also growing recognition that physical and mental wellbeing support should be extended to all workers, regardless of the type of contract they hold.

Beyond adapting regulatory frameworks to reflect a changing world of work, it is important to ensure that regulations are effectively enforced. Robust enforcement mechanisms are in the interest not only of workers, but also ethical and compliant employers and agencies. Ensuring that regulations are clearly communicated, well understood, and deliver on their intended outcomes is a shared responsibility. This makes enforcement a key area where social partners can play a strategic role.



8. Details of the EU Directive are available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/rights-work/labour-law/working-conditions/temporary-agency-workers_en

A TIMELY MOMENT TO REVIEW WORKING CONDITIONS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Across the EU, regulations in place continue to impose restrictions on the duration of temporary placements with one employer, sector-specific constraints, and caps on the proportion of temporary agency workers within a company's workforce. With labour markets in flux and the needs of both workers and employers evolving, now is a good moment to debate existing working conditions and regulatory frameworks. Technological disruption and the growing diversity of employment arrangements are also important factors impacting these frameworks operate.

Ensuring that any regulatory changes are practical and enforceable is a key priority. It is important to have the right structures in place at national and company level. In Spain, for instance, companies have Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Committees, but reaching agreement on their composition remains a challenge, with ongoing debate over whether sectoral delegates should sit along-

side company-level representatives. Reviewing working conditions for temporary agency workers should be linked to broader labour market inclusion strategies and placement procedures. In some contexts, the challenges concern timing more than substance.

Looking ahead, debates in several countries are worth monitoring. In Poland discussions are underway about adjusting working time arrangements. Among the options considered are reducing the number of daily working hours or shifting to a four-day week with nine-hour days. These proposals may have implications for user companies and encourage shifts toward more flexible models such as outsourcing.

Another future-focused theme is the growing impact of climate change—particularly in view of extreme heat—and its implications for OSH policies.

STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT AND RAISING AWARENESS

Regulatory frameworks and collective agreements can only be effective if they are backed by effective enforcement at the national level. As highlighted above, this is in the best interests of both compliant businesses and workers. Sectoral collective agreements are not always legally binding nationwide, meaning that some staffing companies, especially those not affiliated with a national federation, are not obliged to adhere to the same rules. Furthermore, in many countries, minimal requirements to set up a staffing company open door to rogue operators.

To address this, social partners can co-develop certification or licensing schemes, involving robust audits of temporary work agencies and clear sanctions, up to closure, for those failing to meet minimum standards. For such schemes to be effective, end-user companies must also be responsible for rigorously managing their recruitment supply chains, in accordance with national law and practice. They should verify that their staffing partners are accredited and compliant with legislation and collective agreements. A sense of shared responsibility among end-user companies is essential, particularly in the areas of occupational health and safety, where roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and respected.

Social dialogue between national employers' federations can also be an effective mechanism to exchange best practices in compliance and in the responsible placement and management of contingent workers. A forward-looking approach would feature more national federations actively promoting social dialogue at the industry level.

Effective enforcement must go hand in hand with proactive awareness-raising campaigns to ensure that temporary agency workers are informed about their rights and know where to turn if they have concerns. A good example is the Ebitemp initiative in Italy. This bipartite social protection fund recently launched a sensitisation programme designed to help agency workers fully understand their rights and obligations under their specific employment status. In 2024 alone, 6,800 courses were delivered to 88,488 agency workers.

In France, the Fastt bipartite social protection fund has developed an innovative approach to OSH awareness through its mobile outreach programme. Trucks travel directly to workplaces to distribute information and promote best practices among temporary agency workers. In 2024, 3,000 prevention days reached 68,000 agency workers across the country.

CASE STUDY: Rights and Duties Courses for Agency Workers – Ebitemp and Forma.temp (Italy)

Ebitemp is the bipartite fund established by the social partners in Italy to enhance welfare within the sector and provide a network of services and income support for agency workers. The fund was introduced through the sectoral collective labour agreement (CLA) signed by the Italian federation of agency work companies (Assolavoro) and the sectoral trade unions (FeLSA-Cisl, NidiL Cgil, UILTemp).

The fund is financed through a contribution based on the salaries paid to agency workers and is charged to the agencies: 0.2% for fixed-term contracts and 0.3% for open-ended agency work contracts.

Ebitemp provides a wide range of services to agency workers, including support for childcare and maternity leave, assistance for people with disabilities, health coverage, personal loans, mobility support, accident-related benefits, and awareness of working conditions. A related initiative of training and income support is the mandatory training module on rights and duties sensitisation, organised by agency work companies through another legally established bipartite fund Forma.temp. It is designed to raise awareness and understanding among agency workers of their rights, equal treatment principles, and the triangular employment relationship.

This training module is delivered both virtually and in-person by tutors selected by the sectoral social partners. In 2024, a total of 6,800 courses were delivered for 88,488 agency workers, 40% in classroom and 60% virtually.

CASE STUDY: Awareness Raising through the 'À Vous la Santé' Health Truck (FASTT – France)

The 'À Vous la Santé et la Sécurité' (Your Health and Safety) initiative was established by the social partners in France as an innovative way to raise awareness around health, wellbeing, and accident prevention. Six converted lorries travel across the country, visiting temporary agency workers directly at their workplaces.

Each mobile event is tailored to the needs and priorities of the temporary workers at the site, in consultation with the agency and the employer. A typical session includes:

- A qualified sports coach offering practical advice on physical wellbeing, including posture, mobility, and warm-up routines before strenuous tasks
- A healthcare professional providing advice on personal health, including nutrition and sleep
- An OSH specialist discussing workplace risks and specific issues such as the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Each session last 30 minutes with small groups of up to 15 agency workers. The value of this programme is that it engages with the workers in their place of work on 'real life' situations as well as on broad topics such as cardiovascular risk, avoiding hearing loss, addiction prevention and road safety. In 2024, 'A vous la Santé' organized 3,000 awareness-raising and accident-prevention days and engaged with 68,000 agency workers on their workplace.

SOCIAL PROTECTION: KEY FINDINGS

Adapting social protection systems to a constantly evolving employment landscape and diverse work arrangements is an ongoing priority in many countries. A key objective is to ensure that the specific needs of workers on different employment contracts are adequately addressed. Social partners in the TAW sector have a pivotal role to play in this area.

SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CONTEXT: THE FOCUS MUST BE ON DIVERSE FORMS OF WORK

Within the TAW sector, there is a clear need to make national social protection systems more agile and responsive so that individuals remain covered as their employment status shifts. Another focus is to ensure that agency workers have access to social benefits comparable to those available to workers on open-ended permanent contracts.

There are some country-specific challenges, too. In the Netherlands, for instance, access to housing allowances is hindered by unclear employment classifications (e.g., the definition of genuine self-employment) and a broader shortage of affordable, quality housing. In Germany and Spain, low pension contributions for workers in low-wage roles have led to calls for a wide-ranging review of social security contributions.

Robust social protection is pivotal to enabling labour market (re-)integration, particularly for individuals facing practical or personal barriers such as poor transport

links, unmet childcare needs, or health-related challenges. The overarching aim is to create conditions that support people to enter and progress through work.

This ambition is captured by the mission statement of France's FASTT, a key case study example: 'Making daily and professional life easier for temporary workers.' There is an opportunity to learn from new solutions to both emerging and persistent challenges, and to reflect on the role of social partners in bringing about positive change.

One innovative approach is the development of a system of transferable and portable social protection rights. In France, Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands, collective labour agreements and bipartite funds already provide temporary agency workers with access to key benefits for the entire employment period as a temporary worker and are not exclusively linked to individual labour contracts with the temporary work agency.

THERE IS BROAD CONSENSUS ON THE SOCIAL PROTECTION CHALLENGES FOR TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKERS

What are the current challenges and gaps in the coverage and access to social protection provisions for temporary agency workers? Feedback from social partners across Europe flagged several priority issues, including:

- Ensuring that temporary agency workers have access to housing allowances and to adequate accommodation, particularly when they are mobile and their workplace is not within commuting distance.
- Reviewing how OSH provisions, covering both mental and physical wellbeing, apply to temporary agency workers.
- Exploring new ways to prevent workplace accidents, including developing more effective approaches to engaging and communicating with workers.
- Ensuring temporary agency workers have access to reskilling initiatives, enabling transitions into high-growth and high-demand roles and sectors (linking back to the training and reskilling theme).
- Tackling issues related to placements from third countries and instances of 'social dumping'.
- Supporting temporary agency workers on relatively low wages to build up adequate pension contributions, while recognising that agency workers serve a broad range of job profiles and belong to different income groups depending on their job profile.
- Creating a level playing field to avoid scenarios where the benefits workers receive depend on whether they work through an agency that implements collective agreements or not.
- Developing more agile social security systems which enable workers to take up temporary work opportunities without jeopardising their ability to return to social security benefits once assignments end.

NEW SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED TO ADDRESS LATENT SOCIAL PROTECTION CHALLENGES

What are some of the potential solutions to the social protection challenges and gaps identified above? A key starting point is recognising that labour markets are constantly evolving. Ensuring that social protection mechanisms and regulatory frameworks reflect today's realities is more important than ever. As part of this ongoing process of review and realignment, social partners must cooperate with national governments and be at the forefront of developing and implementing new solutions.

Bipartite funds at TAW industry level are a good way to deliver and review social protection provisions. One way forward is for national sectoral social partners to identify and agree on the specific social protection gaps and barriers that need addressing, using good practices from other countries as evidence when making the case for reforms to national governments. The ability to learn from progress in other EU countries and to stay in contact with peers is one of the key legacies of the 'Capacity Building in the Temporary Agency Work Sector' project.

On the issue of access to housing, the overarching challenge in some countries is the need for infrastructure investment and increased construction to provide more affordable and decent housing. While this is a long-term goal, in the short term staffing firms, employers, and social partners can play a vital role by signposting workers to available accommodation and addressing barriers faced by specific groups, such as migrant workers. Several case studies presented below highlight good practice in this area.

With respect to OSH, the establishment of national tripartite OSH bodies can foster a culture around workplace accidents and illness prevention. Globally, 80% of ILO member states have adopted such bodies, and social partners have played a tangible impact on social protection policy—contributing to 158 legal reforms across 65 countries and leading to the expansion of pension schemes, health coverage, and employee benefits.

Social partners have also been involved in the governance of vocational training and sectoral skills bodies, helping to build consensus around major transformations such as digitalisation and decarbonisation. In these areas, they have supported efforts to equip workers with relevant skills needed for future labour market demands.

Effective enforcement mechanisms are a recurring theme, not only in relation to working conditions but also to social protection. One example is the work of social partners with national governments to ensure a level playing field and prevent the circumvention of rules under the Posting of Workers Directive⁹ and the Directive on Temporary Agency Work. Other proposals include setting national minimum wages at comparable levels across the EU and aligning the minimum social protection thresholds between collective labour agreements and statutory minimum wage legislation.

9. Details on the EU Posting of Workers Directive are available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/moving-working-europe/working-another-eu-country/posted-workers_en

CASE STUDY: Supporting Temporary Agency Workers to in Daily and Professional Life (FASTT – France)

FASTT is the bipartite social protection fund set up by the social partners in the French TAW sector. It is financed through a 0.3% contribution on the gross salary of agency workers, paid by agencies. The fund is dedicated to supporting temporary workers by providing various services related to housing, health, risk prevention, transport, finance, and social integration.

The core aims of FASST are to:

- Help individuals access work and succeed in their assignments.
- Protect health and wellbeing and support agency workers in difficult times.
- Provide transportation and accommodation solutions, including discounted car rentals for assignments not accessible by public transport.
- Offer tailored insurance coverage for agency workers and their families.
- Offer access to financial loans at preferential rates, with FASTT acting as guarantor.
- Offer access to affordable childcare options to enable workers to take on temporary assignments.

Access to rental accommodation is a particular challenge for agency workers due to their intermittent income. To address this, FASTT provides guarantees to landlords and to an online housing portal where workers can search for accommodation and manage their dossier.

Personalised assistance is also available through FASTT's network of social support staff. In 2024 alone, FASTT supported over 50,000 housing dossiers and facilitated the signing of 4,000 rental contracts for agency workers.

FASTT plays a crucial role in the French TAW sector by helping agency workers overcome practical barriers to employment and by offering access to essential resources for their professional and personal lives.

CASE STUDY: Safety Net Project and Price Quality System Housing (PKS) – ABU (Netherlands)

Migrant workers and refugees in the Netherlands are at risk of exploitation by rogue employment agencies that charge inappropriate housing fees and evict them as soon as their assignment ends. This situation has contributed to a troubling statistic: around 60% of homeless people in the Netherlands are migrant workers.

In response, ABU (the main Dutch employers' federation for TAW, and a member of the World Employment Confederation-Europe) launched a Safety Net Project in collaboration with the Public Prosecution Service, the Labour Inspectorate, the police, and several national and regional social aid organisations. The initiative, which initially covered five municipalities, aims to protect vulnerable migrant workers by providing housing support. Over 80 migrant workers have already benefited, and there are plans to replicate the initiative to more municipalities across the country.

A complementary initiative is the Price Quality System Housing (PKS), which seeks to support migrant agency workers. Under the new collective labour agreement (CLA) that came into force in January 2025, social partners agreed on a set of binding housing and welfare standards, including:

- Housing must meet standards set out in the CLA.
- Rental agreement must be separate from agency work employment contract.
- Employment agencies may charge for accommodation.
- The PKS determines the maximum rental cost that can be charged, based on transparent, pre-agreed criteria.

The PKS thus guarantees that migrant workers have access to fair housing conditions and costs.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR SOCIAL PARTNERS IN THE TEMPORARY AGENCY WORK SECTOR¹⁰

Case studies and input from participants over the course of this project—including the events in Milan, Warsaw and Brussels—have helped identify key priority areas. A central message is that sectoral social dialogue in the temporary agency work sector will grow in importance amid rapid changes in the world of work, evolving worker expectations, and AI-driven disruption. These trends are also central to the WEC/FT Longitude strategic initiative *The Work We Want*.¹¹ Some of the key findings of this project have been that 81% of the surveyed stakeholders and organisations believe that AI and other tech disruptions will require companies to radically rethink workforce skills and resources.

Sectoral social partners of the temporary agency work sector are well placed to address these challenges; below is a summary of specific focus areas where social partners can take a lead and guidance on what interventions on a national level might look like. This guidance covers all three core themes of the project: Professional training and reskilling, social protection and working conditions.

1. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EFFECTIVE RESKILLING IN THE TEMPORARY AGENCY WORK SECTOR

- Ensuring that temporary agency workers have access to reskilling initiatives is more important than ever, especially in light of technology and AI-driven disruption impacting specific sectors and job roles, and the green transition of EU economies.
- Training and reskilling provide a means of harnessing the benefits of temporary agency work as a driver for labour market integration. Over the course of the project, in several cases, agency work has played a pivotal role in helping specific target groups such as refugees, young people in danger of marginalisation, people with disabilities and older workers returning to the labour market.
- Showcasing practical examples of ‘reskilling in action’ (such as the case studies in this report) and underlining the benefits for workers and employers alike is a vital way forward for social partners in countries where agency workers do not currently enjoy widespread access to training and reskilling programmes.

10. This report was prepared under the framework of the Social Dialogue project. It reflects the analysis and guidance developed by the project partners and does not necessarily represent the views of all participating organisations. The applicability of the practical guidance may vary depending on national contexts and circumstances.

11. Find out more about The Work We Want here: [The Work We Want](#)

2. DRIVE GOOD PRACTICE AND INNOVATION IN TRAINING DELIVERY MODELS AS WELL AS IN PROGRAMME CONTENT AND FUNDING MECHANISMS

- The way that people learn and want to access training is constantly evolving. This needs to be reflected in the way that upskilling and reskilling initiatives are structured and delivered and must become an increasingly pivotal factor in accessing public funding. This includes championing the value of on-the-job learning through temporary assignments and apprenticeship programmes. Social partners can also take a lead in finding new solutions to emerging training delivery challenges, such as ensuring that there is sufficient cohorts of course tutors with up-to-date technical knowledge as well as the ability to engage and motivate participants.
- In terms of content, there is increasing consensus on the need to develop personal or soft skills, as well as technical skills and expertise. Social partners on both a national and EU level have a pivotal role to play in promoting approaches that provide individuals with the best possible opportunity to succeed through work. This includes the provision of mental and pastoral support as a means of overcoming specific barriers and addressing mental health concerns.
- Funding remains a significant issue. Currently, only 0.1% of public spending is allocated to lifelong learning, compared to 4% for early education. Along with championing innovative training delivery and content, social partners can make the case for more agile and responsive funding mechanisms to support continuous upskilling within a fast-changing world of work. In the absence of bipartite funds, other options can be promoted, such as regional/local/EU level funding.

3. NURTURE PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES AND ‘COALITIONS OF CHANGE’ AT A NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

- Championing engagement and regular exchanges between representatives of the agency work sector and organisations involved in supporting specific target groups (NEETs, long-term unemployed, migrants/refugees) is a vital building block for positive and sustainable change. Effective collaboration must be based on a recognition that all parties have their own ways of proceeding, culture and targets. Social partners can help to foster mutual understanding and share best practices across Europe in a way that supports the multi-stakeholder partnerships at national and regional levels, including the enhanced cooperation between public and private employment services to enable life-long learning and labour market integration.
- Sectoral social partners in the agency work sector can help to build multi-stakeholder partnerships at a regional level; practical examples of this were showcased over the course of the project. Ultimately, regional-level coalitions will ensure that training and reskilling programmes reflect changing localised skills needs. Regional partnership networks are also key to delivering bespoke support for different target groups and to addressing specific barriers to accessing training and work opportunities.
- Actively engaging with end-user companies – and representative bodies such as regional and sectoral employer associations – will also ensure that training and reskilling programmes reflect evolving skills needs and that sustainable employment outcomes are delivered. This is another impact opportunity for social partners in the agency work sector.

4. CHAMPION HIRING INNOVATION AND SKILLS AND PROFESSIONALISM WITHIN THE AGENCY WORK SECTOR

- Working in the front line of a shape-shifting jobs market is no easy task, especially when engaging with experienced professionals looking to navigate career transitions or with refugees who have experienced life-changing experiences. The underlines need to continue enhancing skills and capabilities of recruitment professionals.
- WEC's 'The Work We Want' research makes it clear that talent planning has never been more difficult, and

that old approaches are no longer fit for purpose. Accelerating change in outdated hiring procedures and criteria forms part of the equation when it comes to creating more opportunities for target groups. This includes shifting embedded perceptions about work agency work and showcasing what good looks like in terms of the development and ongoing management of those working under different forms of contract.

5. ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION REGIMES THAT REFLECT AN EVOLVING EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

- Within an increasingly diverse and fast-paced employment ecosystem, the focus must be on ensuring that social protection regimes meet the needs of workers operating on the different types of contracts and working arrangements. For example, this must involve ensuring that temporary agency workers have access to social protection benefits and helping those with shorter labour contracts and work assignments access additional social protection benefits that complement their wages and improve their living standards. This means creating more agile social security systems enabling workers to take up temporary work opportunities without losing access to social security benefits once an assignment ends.
- Bipartite institutions at an industry level are uniquely placed to promote and help to implement social protection provisions adapted to the specific needs of agency workers. The opportunity for social partners is to be proactive in influencing the policy debate

around social protection and in collectively developing new solutions to emerging needs and challenges. This advocacy role will often involve raising awareness amongst government departments and policy makers of how temporary agency work operates in practice.

- Examples from countries where social partners have developed successful social protection initiatives should be used to convince national governments of the benefits of trialling similar approaches. One underlying priority is to create framework conditions so that there are no fiscal and economic disincentives in terms of social protection benefits received by workers when transitioning between assignments or upon termination of placements. The specific design of these systems of transferable and portable social protection systems must always reflect the overall organisation of temporary agency work in a given countries and the categories of labour contracts that are provided to temporary agency workers.

6. IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE AWARENESS RAISING INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE WORKER SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

- Such initiatives can make a significant impact, especially when they are tailored to an audience of temporary agency workers (for example, by delivering mobile workshop sessions taking place in the end-user workplace as we saw in some of our case studies). Increasing the focuses on mental health and well-being as well as on physical safety, remain an area of attention for the social partners in addition to the national obligations in place in terms of occupational health and safety.
- Reviewing the way that current occupational health and safety provisions (linked to mental health as well as physical wellbeing) are applied to temporary agency workers is an ongoing priority. Finding new ways of preventing accidents

7. DEVELOP NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH END-USER COMPANIES

- Creating regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms that work for all parties must involve buy-in from end-user companies. One aim is to ensure that employers only work with compliant agencies and regularly reviewing the feedback from the temporary workers on their site.
- Social partners can take a lead here through partnership work with national employers' federations and sectoral social partners to establish new initiatives that promote equal opportunities, labour market integration and risk prevention. There is a need to involve end-users and to ensure that they recognise shared responsibilities. This includes the verification of licensing of agencies where licensing systems apply in order to avoid using rogue agencies (also in relation with non-binding CLAs).

8. INFLUENCE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR THE TEMPORARY AGENCY WORK SECTOR

- Specific regulatory challenges are linked to placements from third countries and occurrences of unfair competition of uncompliant intermediaries and to the adequate enforcement of European and national law. The opportunity for social partners is to remain at the forefront of the political and public policy debate to ensure that any new regulatory interventions are proportionate and workable and deliver a level playing field on the labour market.
- Social partners can be at the forefront of ensuring that regulatory frameworks are sufficiently agile to allow innovative provisions on working conditions in the agency work sector, especially in countries where the sector is still in the early stages of development.
- Enhancing regulatory frameworks and working conditions in the temporary agency work sector must be accompanied by developing effective regulatory responses to other forms of flexible employment, such as platform work. Social partners must be at the forefront of these policy debates on both a national and EU level. The EU Directive on platform work provides a valuable regulatory framework to ensure a level playing field between digital labour platforms and the temporary agency work sector.

9. FOCUS ON EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS AND AWARENESS-RAISING

- Regulatory requirements only have real impact when backed by appropriate and workable enforcement mechanisms. Enforcing legislation, regulations and Collective Labour Agreements protects temporary agency workers and the interests of compliant temporary work agencies. Social partners must play a central role in the enforcement efforts, including national transposition assessments and regulatory reviews.
- Ensuring that agency workers are aware of their rights—particularly around pay, health and safety, and social protection benefits—is essential for flagging bad practices and identifying rogue intermediaries who are undermining labour standards. Social partners are well-positioned to drive joint awareness campaigns and to implement effective enforcement mechanisms.

