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ANNEX

2026 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 policymaking, social innovation and social experimentation, supports job mobility as well as capacity building of stakeholders. In line with the ESF+ policy objectives, it is one of the tools contributing to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), mainly addressing the areas of employment and skills, labour markets and labour mobility, social protection, active inclusion and working conditions.

Policy context

Following the European elections in 2024, the European Commission presented the Political Guidelines 2024-2029. The Commission's Strategic Plan for the next five years will focus on the support for employment, social, education and skills area, and on creating a Union of Skills; developing the first ever EU Anti-poverty strategy; putting forward a Quality Jobs Roadmap developed together with the social partners; creating a European Affordable Housing Plan; and facilitating digital and green transitions. Among other actions, it will also launch a new Pillar Action Plan. It also aligns with an increased need to build capacities within Member States and to harness cross-border and cross-regional cooperation.

In the field of 'Promoting social fairness in the modern economy', the Commission intends to:

- Set out a new action plan on the implementation of the EPSR to reach our 2030 social headline targets.
- Support fair wages, good working conditions, training and fair job-to-job transitions through a new Quality Jobs Roadmap.
- Strengthen the European Social Dialogue through a new Pact for European Social Dialogue.
- Address the root causes of poverty through the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Prevent and combat social exclusion of children through education, healthcare and essential public services by strengthening the Child Guarantee.
- Tackle the housing crisis by putting forward the first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan and creating a pan-European investment platform for affordable and sustainable housing.
- Rolling out the Social Climate Fund to support renovations and energy-efficient housing.
- Tackle the root causes of demographic change and adapt to new realities.
- Reduce regional disparities so that Europeans can live and work in the place they call home.

The current macro-economic context and the geopolitical situation have challenged the EU social model by impacting the cost of living, housing and increased inequalities. In addition, rapid technological shifts, demographic change and sectoral transitions are under way. A key focus of this Commission will therefore be to strengthen social fairness, which will in turn also strengthen the competitiveness of the European social market economy.

Since 2017, the principles of the EPSR have guided efforts to tackle shared challenges in employment, skills and social issues. These principles were transformed into tangible actions through a dedicated action plan with headline 2030 targets. Prioritising continued

implementation is crucial, and a new action plan on the implementation of the EPSR will be proposed in Q4/2025.

The actions of the Union of Skills Communication, adopted on 5 March 2025, will tackle skills and labour shortages, ensuring that businesses have access to the skilled workforce necessary to improve their productivity and competitiveness. The Union of Skills also aims to ensure that education and training systems prepare all Europeans for the fast-changing skills needs of today and of the future, through high quality and inclusive education, vocational training and lifelong learning. At the same time, the Commission will work to ensure quality jobs with decent working conditions, high standards for health and safety and collective bargaining through a Quality Jobs Roadmap.

Programming priorities for 2026

The 2026 work programme of the EaSI strand will continue to support the implementation of the Commission initiatives. Actions will aim to fulfil the general objectives of Article 4 and Article 25 of the ESF+ Regulation. Efforts will focus on strengthening employment, ensuring fair labour mobility as well as safe and fair working conditions, fostering education and skills and helping to improve 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 in the context of the twin transition.

- *Enhancing analytical knowledge (Art. 25(a))*

The EaSI strand will notably provide funding for evaluations, studies, impact assessments, monitoring and audits. It 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 expert network in the field of labour law, the expert network in the field of employment and labour market policies). It will support the provision of core statistics with the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

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)). Analytical knowledge will also be enhanced through collaboration with the OECD, the ILO and the Joint Research Centre. Ad-hoc studies may also be launched in these areas.

The analytical work may notably cover jobs and skills, quality jobs, working conditions, social rights and inclusion, labour mobility, the external dimension of the EU's employment and social policies and instruments, employment and social governance.

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

The EaSI strand will support the communication on policy initiatives, in particular in relation to the Quality jobs roadmap. It will support services and measures to enhance cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES), 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).

Actions will enhance communication regarding the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP), provide support to social economy stakeholders, and include mutual learning activities, guidance and awareness raising workshops, advisory services and trainings.

It will support mutual learning in combating poverty and exclusion, including homelessness and services for mutual learning within the European Employment Strategy.

It will support events, mutual learning and capacity building in social protection, in particular to support the implementation of the provisions of the Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care, the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to social protection, the Pension Adequacy and Ageing reports and the forthcoming report on flexible retirement pathways, contributing to the implementation of the Demography Toolbox.

- ***Social experiments (Art. 25 (c)) and acceleration of the transfer and scaling up of social innovations (Art. 25(i))***

The Lithuanian ESF Agency (ESFA) has been entrusted by the Commission with the Social Innovation Plus Initiative, a transnational cooperation scheme focused on transferring and scaling innovative solutions. ESFA will continue to lead this initiative on behalf of the European Commission in 2026.

It will foster transnational cooperation and capacity building for ESF+ Managing Authorities and other key stakeholders through tools such as communities of practices, networks and a social innovation database. The European Competence Centre plays a crucial role by managing knowledge, tools, and methods, thereby strengthening the support provided to the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation.

It will award grants for transnational projects that aim to accelerate the scaling up of social innovation. In 2026, the call(s) for proposals¹ will focus on the Anti-poverty Strategy and the European Child Guarantee.

- ***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 Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS), posting of workers and undeclared work (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 and EssPASS.

It will also support Your Europe Advice, an European Commission service active which since 1996 offers free advice on EU rights for all citizens and companies, provided by a network of legal experts in all EU countries.

¹ List of calls and conditions for applying can be found on ESFA website: [Transnational Calls - Europos socialinio fondo agentūra](#)

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

The EaSI work programme will continue to grant support for EU-level networks active in the areas of social inclusion.

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

- Committee Senior Labour Inspectors (SLIC) - Thematic Days-Plenary meetings
- Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) meeting
- Public Employment Services (PES) Network Board meeting

- ***Guidance for the development of social infrastructure needed for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Art. 25(h))***

The EaSI strand will aim at supporting the development of social infrastructures and related services mainly through mutual learning, particularly in areas such as social housing, childcare and education, healthcare and long-term care.

- ***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 and OECD, in particular on decent work in global supply chains, on occupational safety and health, and on the effective implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work.
- 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 2026 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
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1.2. Budget breakdown

Budget Line	Amount
07.020100.05 - ESF+ shared management strand - Operational expenditure (Transnational cooperation)	EUR 10.397.566
07.020400- ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand	EUR 110.984.429
TOTAL	EUR 121.381.995

1.3. Type of actions to be financed

- for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): EUR 36.635.000

Budget Line	Amount
07.020400	EUR 36.635.000

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

- for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 4): EUR 38.099.429

Budget Line	Amount
07.020400	EUR 38.099.429

- for actions implemented under indirect management (point 5): EUR 39.162.566

Budget Line	Amount
07.020100.05	EUR 10 397 566
07.020400	EUR 28.765.000

- 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 7.485.000

Budget Line	Amount
07.020400	EUR 7.485.000

1.4. Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

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

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

2. Grants

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

BUDGET LINE

07.020400- ESF+ Employment and Social Innovation strand

2.1. Direct grants (awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 198 of the Financial Regulation)

2.1.1. 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

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

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

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

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

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

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

Type of applicants targeted by the action

According to Article 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

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

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The International Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) Monographs Programme identifies carcinogenic hazards. The grant aims to provide the Commission with updated scientific information to support preventing occupational cancer, specifically related to the EU's Carcinogens, Mutagens or Reprotoxic substances Directive (2004/37/EC).

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 Directive²) and its associated scientific committees. They support the committees in developing sound recommendations and opinions on limit values for chemicals based on IARC Monographs (among other relevant literature). The IARC Monographs also contribute to improve research and data collection to prevent work-related diseases.

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

² 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 International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is uniquely positioned to receive this grant. As the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s specialised cancer research agency, IARC has unparalleled global legitimacy and reach. It is globally renowned for its independence and expertise in identifying cancer causes and providing scientific guidance on health hazards arising from environmental and occupational exposures. The IARC Monograph Programme delivers unique, essential and authoritative information.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

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

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Activities to be funded will provide information, advice 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 as well as other EU directives 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.

The action will contribute to keeping scientific knowledge and evidence-base in the area of NIR up-to-date and underpinning policy developments in this field.

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.

ICNIRP is recognized for its expertise in the area of non-ionizing radiation protection, including electromagnetic fields used in telecommunications, medical imaging, and various consumer products. ICNIRP delivers independent, scientifically sound advice and guidance on the health and environmental effects of non-ionizing radiation, which is crucial for public safety and informed policymaking.

ICNIRP provides unique and authoritative guidelines and recommendations on exposure limits that are utilized globally by governments and regulatory bodies to establish safety standards and regulations.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2. Calls for proposals

2.2.1. Call for proposals: Annual operating grants to support EU level social NGO networks

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The calls aims at promoting social inclusion and combating poverty by providing financial support (second annual operating grant of Framework Partnership Agreement 2026-2029) 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.

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 action³

Grants may be awarded only to networks that have signed a framework partnership agreement with the Commission for the period 2026-2029 (following the call ESF-2025-OG-NETW-NGO-FPA).

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

³ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

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

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

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

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

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

The action supports the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Type of applicants targeted by the action⁴

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

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

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

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

⁴ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

2.2.3. Call for proposals: Posting of workers: enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

This call for proposals supports the implementation, application and enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC and Directive (EU) 2018/957 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of provision of services and its Enforcement Directive 2014/67/EU.

It will fund transnational cooperation initiatives designed to support the development of programs by relevant stakeholders involved in the context of posting, ensuring a significant and lasting impact on workers, companies, and administrations. Activities aim at supporting competent authorities in Member States and social partners in administrative cooperation, in increasing access to essential information for posted workers, and to promote the evidence basis through the collection and evaluation of original data and analysis.

Expected results include the development of new or the enhancement of existing exchanges, peer reviews, and training programs among officials from competent public authorities and relevant social partners and stakeholders. These initiatives will focus on monitoring compliance with and enforcing regulations related to posted workers, as well as fostering administrative cooperation and mutual assistance. Additionally, the results will encompass the creation or improvement of online platforms designed to collect and disseminate high-quality, user-friendly, and targeted information specifically for posted workers.

This call for proposals supports implementation of the following key principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights: (3) equal opportunities; (5) secure and adaptable employment; (6) wages; (7) information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals; (8) social dialogue and involvement of workers; (10) healthy, safe and well – adapted work environment and data protection.

Type of applicants targeted by the action⁵

Public authorities; Non-profit organisations (private or public); Research centres/institutes; Higher education establishments; Civil society organisations, Social partner organisation at European, national or regional level

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

3. Prizes

N/A

⁵ Specific eligibility conditions for calls for proposals will be further defined in the call documents, to be published on the [Funding & Tender Portal](#).

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 (up to EUR 10 million) for technical support services for measures to enhance cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES). The maximum duration of the contract will be four years, starting in 2027.

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 2026

4.1. Employment and skills

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, impact assessments and evaluations, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network, data collection and availability) 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.

The actions may encompass a range of key areas, including youth employment, long-term unemployment, undeclared work, platform work, quality jobs, (social and inclusive) entrepreneurship, microfinance and social enterprise finance, social economy, (fair) green and digital transitions (including the EU Fair Transition Observatory), digital nomadism, algorithmic management and artificial intelligence, quality traineeships, skills (e.g. related to the Union of Skills; 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.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL; through cross sub-delegation and co-delegation to another Director-General

4.2. Social protection and inclusion

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, impact assessments and evaluations, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network, data collection and availability), 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 and support the exchange of social security information.

The actions may cover notably the areas of inclusive employment and growth, alleviation of poverty, homelessness, wealth inequalities and in-work poverty, child policies, 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.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL; through cross sub-delegation and co-delegation to another Director-General

4.3. Labour markets and labour mobility

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, transposition checks, policy advice, impact assessments and 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 and services (including support to the Public Employment Services network), technical assistance, meetings and events, communication (including contribution to the Your Europe Advice service), dissemination and capacity-building and IT services (including the development and maintenance of the EURES portal and related translations).

These activities notably 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.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL; through cross sub-delegation and co-delegation to another Director-General

4.4. Safe and fair working conditions

Actions in this policy area aim to support analytical activities (including research, policy advice, impact assessments and evaluations, statistics, studies and surveys, expert network data collection and availability) as well as activities of 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 and 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.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL; through cross sub-delegation and co-delegation to another Director-General

4.5. Cross-cutting actions

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.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL; through cross sub-delegation and co-delegation to another Director-General

5. *Actions implemented under indirect management*

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

BUDGET LINES

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

07.020400- ESF+ - Employment and Social Innovation strand

5.1. Transnational cooperation initiative for Social innovation

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the Lithuanian implementing agency for ESF+ (ESFA) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 of the Financial Regulation.

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 (Article 5) allocates funding for transnational cooperation in social innovation for 2021-2027. The action is implemented through contribution agreements with the entrusted entity (based on the annually available budget, complemented by the 07.020400 ESF+ - Employment and Social Innovation strand and the 07.020200 ESF+ - Technical Assistance).

The transnational cooperation initiative for social innovation includes two work streams:

- A grant program⁶ supporting transnational projects focused on developing, validating, scaling-up and implementing social innovations, in particular addressing the anti-poverty strategy and the European Child Guarantee;
- A European Competence Centre for Social Innovation, which facilitates 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 National competence centres for social innovation; (c) validate and showcase innovative solutions, including through the EU social innovation database; (d) continue 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: Mainstreaming employment, skills, and social aspects in clean energy policies at international level

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The action will support analytical work on just transition policies and best practice and reports collecting and presenting the evidence. The deliverables will feed into the work of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), including the CEM Summit, associated side events and other relevant gatherings such as the Annual International Just Transition events, including relevant global fora and roundtables.

Activities will aim at: (a) developing analysis and guidance to support countries, companies and social partner organisations in promoting people-centred, just and inclusive clean energy

⁶ List of calls and conditions for applying can be found on ESFA website: [Transnational Calls - Europos socialinio fondo agentūra](#)

transitions; (b) better understanding the labour market needs, including for skills development, diversity management and labour market transitions, associated with clean energy transitions; (c) exploring the related training and education needs to maximize job creation potential from clean energy policies and assisting governments in implementing actions to ensure people benefit from new employment opportunities arising from the clean energy transition.

Expected results are the further development and effective implementation of the CEM initiative on “Empowering People: Skills & Inclusivity for Just Transitions” (CEM-EPI) and follow-up of the campaign on sustainable lifestyles

These activities will in particular contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar Social Rights principles 1 “Education, training and life-long learning”, 4. “Active support to employment” and 5. “Secure and adaptable employment”.

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the 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, as well as in climate, energy and environmental policies, economic and fiscal policies.

5.3. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Job-to-job transitions and employment outcomes in the context of the Clean Industrial Deal: sector-specific & econometric analysis

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The principal aim of this action is to enrich the evidence base and deepen the analytical understanding of employment impacts of the green, clean and industrial transition in the EU. This project will provide an in-depth focus on some industrial sectors that are key in the Clean Industrial Deal context such as construction, energy, chemicals, steel and metal industry, and circular economy.

Expected outcomes are: (a) a report analyzing employment trajectories as well as their characteristics and drivers in the context of the green transition. It will focus on most affected and strategic sectors, vulnerable workers, population groups and regions; (b) enhanced data and evidence basis.

The action will build on the specific methodological expertise and previous project 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 and monitoring tools.

This action supports principles related to Education, training and life-long learning (Chapter I) 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, as well as in climate, energy and environmental policies, economic and fiscal policies.

5.4. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Analytical work on social protection in old age

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The analytical work by the OECD aims to provide an integrated analysis of social protection adequacy for the elderly, supporting the preparation of the 2027 Commission-SPC report, policy development, and mutual learning.

The primary objectives include developing a methodology for evaluating the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of social protection interventions aimed to supporting living standards in old age, in particular pensions and long-term care. This action seeks to enhance policy intervention efficiency to maintain adequate social protection for older people in a context of fiscal pressures in an ageing society.

Expected results include producing a report analyzing the efficiency of social protection spending in EU Member States and Norway, developing a new methodology for evaluating the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of social protection interventions in support living standards in old age, and generating new data and statistical analyses to inform the Commission's policy work on social protection and long-term care.

The action addresses the following principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights: 12. Social protection; 15. Old age income and pensions; and 18. Long-term care.

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 combination of expertise in social and employment policies as well as economic and fiscal policies, its various relevant databases as well as its on-going work on the future of social protections.

5.5. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Global Deal to promote capacity building for social dialogue and collective bargaining in third countries (Phase III)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

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

The Global Deal will support regional events to promote social dialogue and collective bargaining, research on social dialogue and capacity building in third countries, especially countries with which the EU has a free trade agreement or which benefit from Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). Activities will notably include: development of comparative analyses of social dialogue actors, institutions, and process at the sub-regional level; delivery of a training programme targeting tripartite constituents and labour relations practitioners.

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

Implementing entity

Implementation tasks and funds are entrusted to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 of the Financial Regulation.

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

5.6. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Monitoring inequalities for inclusive policy responses

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

This project supports the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Jobs Quality Roadmap by providing evidence and analysis on how digitalization, demographic changes, the green transition, and uncertainties affect the EU's socio-economic landscape, particularly for vulnerable groups.

It aims to: (a) utilize OECD's expertise and access to new data sources to analyze trends and drivers of inequality, providing insights for policy-making in labor markets, skills development, and social inclusion; (b) evaluate the role of specific policies in mitigating socio-economic divergence using advanced methodologies and underutilized data.

Specific activities could include: (a) investigate intergenerational inequality and fairness; (b) explore inequality impacts related to aging; (c) study how technological change affects income and wealth distribution; (d) examine geographical inequalities in income, labor market outcomes, and service access; (e) analyze economic and social mobility inequalities using for example longitudinal data; (f) assess the impact of uncertainties on inequality of outcomes and opportunities.

This action will contribute to the implementation of EPSR principles 02. Gender equality, 03. Equal opportunities, 06. Wages, 12. Social protection, and 20. Access to essential services.

Implementing entity

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

This action will leverage the OECD's unique capacity to collect and analyse new data on economic and social inequalities among individuals and households in EU and OECD countries. This includes data from national administrative registers and different "big data" sources .

5.7. Contribution agreement with the OECD: Inclusive and Social entrepreneurship

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The principal aim of this action is to develop robust analytical knowledge to support inclusive and social entrepreneurship policies in Europe.

On inclusive entrepreneurship, this cooperation seeks to provide the Commission with high-quality analyses, including 27 country notes on inclusive entrepreneurship policies and the Missing Entrepreneurs series. This resource serves as a key reference for stakeholders, empowering the ecosystem with a scientifically sound basis. Additionally, the action aims to advance the development of the Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool Regarding social entrepreneurship. The OECD plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the EU Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) by delivering quality studies.

These activities will in particular contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar Social Rights principles 04. Active support to employment and 05. Secure and adaptable employment.

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. It has developed relevant teams of research for more than a decade, it also has a direct access to the representatives of the OECD members in order to enrich and validate its findings.

5.8. 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. These efforts support policy development for sound chemical management, including preventive measures for occupational exposures to hazardous chemicals, and help prevent occupational cancer and other chemicals-related diseases

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 159 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.

5.9. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Ensuring decent work 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) preparing 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 action focuses on decent work and sustainable and inclusive employment. It therefore addresses many interlinked fields, and 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

Entrusted implementation tasks and funds 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: it has a unique tripartite structure with a focus on the social partners and has a long standing experience in project management including in projects on decent work.

5.10. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Vision Zero Fund (VZF) on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in global supply chains (Phase IV)

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), assists the EU in promoting a level playing field and addressing 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.

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 many principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Commission strategy for decent work worldwide , as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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 important issues for EU such as trade, employment and labour. All EU Free Trade Agreements and the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) trade system include commitments on ratification and application of ILO labour conventions.

5.11. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Advancing decent work worldwide including through formalization and social dialogue

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The objective of this action is to promote decent work standards globally by encouraging the transition from informal to formal employment and strengthening social dialogue. It strives to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth by enhancing compliance with international labour standards, improving working conditions, and fostering effective collaboration between employers, workers, and governments to ensure fair and sustainable employment practices.

The project aims to develop tools and instruments - including in collaboration with relevant state institutions, tripartite organizations and social partners - to facilitate formalization in certain sectors. The project is expected to contribute to improved labour conditions and strengthened social dialogue mechanisms worldwide.

This action is supporting many principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Commission strategy for decent work worldwide , as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Implementing entity

Entrusted implementation tasks and funds to the ILO on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The ILO's unique competence and expertise, combined with its staff presence in relevant countries, position it as the ideal organization to deliver the project effectively. The ILO also has a unique tripartite structure with a focus on the social partners and a long-standing experience in tackling informality and in project management including in projects on decent work.

5.12. Contribution agreement with the ILO: Just transition & quality jobs

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The action will support the EU-ILO Just Transition Pavilion for COP31-33 (Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC⁷) and analytical work to support fair job transitions in the context of the green and digital transitions. The objectives pursued are: (a) provide detailed, current data on job quality and analyze policies for fair job transitions at the sectoral level, contributing to policy development within the EU; (b) co-organize the EU-ILO Just Transition Pavilion at COP, featuring high-level events and workshops to support the UNFCCC Work Programme on Just Transition and related ministerial activities; (c) identify and assess best practices and innovative solutions for just transitions in countries outside the EU; (d) supply data and evidence on the international effects of the green and digital transitions (for the European Fair Transition Observatory); (e) enhance awareness, evidence, and stakeholder engagement on labor and skills shortages related to green and digital transitions.

Expected results are a comprehensive understanding of "green jobs" and "digital transition jobs" globally; improved evidence base, including quantitative estimates of social investment needs for skills development and job creation; enhanced awareness and stakeholder cooperation on just transitions at the international level, contributing to initiatives like the "Green Jobs for Youth Pact."

The collaboration aims to strengthen just transition policies and capacity, aligning with the European Pillar of Social Rights and addressing the challenges of labor shifts in transitioning sectors.

Implementing entity

Entrusted implementation tasks and funds to the ILO on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The ILO is equipped with unique capacities in just transition, labour, skills and job quality, including technical expertise for research and analysis on aspects relating to the twin digital and green transitions, notably thanks to Green Jobs Programme established in 2009, the Just Transition Guidelines of 2015, the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative of 2019, and the recent Global Coalition for Social Justice, among others. It is well positioned to create relevant evidence and knowledge globally and exploit synergies of various actors (including the EU).

⁷ [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#)

5.13. Contribution agreement with the CEB: Strengthening national homelessness strategies⁸

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The Contribution agreement will support the CEB (Council of Europe Development Bank) to provide upstream technical assistance to Member States. The objective is to translate existing national homelessness strategies into concrete project pipelines, with a particular emphasis on Housing-First and housing-led approaches.

The expected outcomes include the design and implementation of effective projects, including sustainable funding arrangements for interventions at national as well as local level.

This action will support the implementation of principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which relates to housing and assistance to the homeless, as well as other principles in the area of social protection and inclusion (Chapter III).

Implementing entity

Entrusted implementation tasks and funds to the CEB on the basis of Articles 62.1(c)(ii) and 157 of the Financial Regulation.

The CEB is a member of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, contributing with its expertise in funding social inclusion projects.

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, the Child Guarantee, the Youth Guarantee, employment, minimum income, mobility, social protection and inclusion, Distributional Impact Assessment, working conditions, labour law, social economy, and pensions.

Implementation

⁸ Implemented directly by DG EMPL or through cross sub-delegation and co-delegation to another Director-General

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, including related to the green and digital transition; maintain and use the micro-simulation tool EUROMOD that assesses the impact of tax-benefit reforms and provide data on income distribution and poverty; support the delivery and operation of an e-learning platform.

Implementation

Service level agreements with JRC

9.4. 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

9.5. External evaluators

Description and objective of the implementing measure

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

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL