



## Contents

### Global Public Affairs

SAVE THE DATE: Promoting Decent Work in Platform Work on 11 March (10:00 – 12:00 CET)	2
IOE and WEC publish joint paper on Covid-19 Recovery	3
WEC provides input to B20 Inception Paper	3

### European Public Affairs

SAVE THE DATE: 24 February WEC-Europe Webinar  
“Working conditions and social protection for diverse forms of work - the case of online talent platform workers”



Report on strengthening EU Social Dialogue by Andrea Nahles – special advisor to Commissioner Nicolas Schmit	5
European Economic Forecast Winter 2021	6
World Employment Confederation-Europe letter to Members of the European Parliament on work mobility	6
WEC-Europe discusses AI with DG Connect	7

### Position Papers

IOE/WEC Joint Paper on the Covid-19 Recovery

WEC-Europe Position Paper on collective bargaining rights for self-employed

### Upcoming Events

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

WEC-Europe online event “Working conditions and social protection for diverse forms of work - the case of online talent platform workers”

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

WEC/ILO Webinar on Platform Work

### Contact us

**WEC Head Office**

Tel. +322 421 1586  
info@wecglobal.org  
www.wecglobal.org

## Global Public Affairs

Save The Date 11 March - 10:00-12:00

### Promoting Decent Work in Platform Work

On 11 March 2021, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the World Employment Confederation (WEC) will organize a Discussion Forum on Platform work. We invite you to join the conversation and save the date in your calendar.

#### Programme

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 10:00 | Start   |
| 10:05 | 2021 World Employment and Social Outlook<br>Uma Rani Amara – Senior Economist ILO   |
| 10:35 | Panel Discussion on Promoting Decent Work in Platform Work<br>Roberto Suarez-Santos – Secretary General, IOE<br>Government Speaker – TBD<br>Sharan Burrows – Secretary General, ITUC<br>Bettina Schaller – President World Employment Confederation |
| 11:35 | Q&A from the audience   |
| 11:55 | Wrap Up   |
| 12:00 | End   |

ILO, IOE and WEC very much look forward to welcoming you on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March for this timely and current discussion on the changing world of work and the labour market recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER AND JOIN](#)

## IOE and WEC publish joint paper on Covid-19 Recovery

WEC and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) have jointly developed a set of policy recommendations. They set out a clear and concrete path for a sustainable recovery of employment and decent work after the Covid-19 pandemic. It pushes a private sector led recovery through promoting diverse forms of work, employability and social innovation of activation and social protection frameworks. Its recommendations are built on four pillars:

- Policies for the short to mitigate the immediate impact of Covid-19  
Highlighting the urgent business needs on the short term in context of lockdowns, and limitation of operations business.
- Working in the New Normal  
Focussing on the (regulatory) conditions for business to shape the recovery of employment through new ways of working
- Employability in The New Normal  
Focussing on promoting sustainable employability in order to bridge persistent skill gaps
- The Structure of the New Normal  
Pushing the social innovation and reform of activation and social protection policies to better support labour market mobility and transition.

[Click here to download the joint position](#)

### Assessment and next steps:

This joint policy position is another outcome of the growing collaboration between WEC and the global business community and is a great opportunity to amplify the industry's labour market message.

We welcome WEC membership to join the WEC and IOE in sharing these recommendations with stakeholders and tailoring them to your public affairs reality. In doing so, the WEC Head Office stand ready to support in this.

WEC and IOE will shape a series of communication activities to share the paper amongst the global stakeholders.

## WEC provides input into B20 Inception paper

Following the publication of the B20 Inception paper for the Employment & Education Taskforce, WEC provide comments. WEC has critical of the structure and topics chosen by the chair of the E&E Taskforce.

It put forward an alternative structure that would focus on business' ability to:

- (1.) build to demand for labour; and
- (2.) tap into a (a.) skilled and (b.) inclusive pool of talent.

From WEC's perspective these are crucial elements for a labour market framework that is conducive for mitigation of the Covid-19 fallout on economies and labour markets. Also, this will much better align with WEC's priority to push diverse forms of work as key instrument to create and recover jobs. As such these comments align with the IOE & WEC paper addressed earlier in this Advocacy Report.

The call for a restructure was successful. In a new version of the B20 paper a more appropriate structure is provided and diverse forms of work has a prominent position in this important document to the employment ministers from the 20 biggest economies.

### Next steps

Together with the WEC G20 Taskforce, WEC will continue to lobby the B20 employment and education paper in order to secure the final document aligns with the employment industry's interests.

## European Public Affairs

### Working conditions and social protection for diverse forms work - the case of online talent platforms

Linked to the EU policy debates on working conditions for platform workers, a forthcoming EU Social Partners consultation and an report discussed in the European Parliament on the topic, the World Employment Confederation-Europe organises an **online debate on "Working Conditions and social protection for diverse forms of work – The case of online talent platforms."**

#### Main Speakers:

- Max Uebe, Head of Unit, DG Employment
- Sylvie Brunet, Member of the European Parliament
- Adam Kosa, Member of the European Parliament
- Fredrik Fahning, Zenjob
- Willem Pieter de Groen, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

The event will be moderated by Michael Freytag from the World Employment Confederation-Europe Head Office.

[Click here to register](#)

#### Assessment:

The webconference is organised by the World Employment Confederation-Europe to position the industry on the rising European debates on online talent platforms. A range of important and influence speakers will provide an excellent platform for discussion.

World Employment Confederation-Europe members are of course welcome to attend the webconference and are requested to register in advance.

## Report on strengthening EU Social Dialogue by Andrea Nahles – special advisor to Commissioner Nicolas Schmit

On request of EU Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, Andrea Nahles, a former German Minister of Labour and Social Affairs prepared a Report on strengthening EU social dialogue. Preceding to the drafting of the report, Andrea Nahles held a series of consultations and online meetings with EU cross-industry and sectoral social partners.

The final report puts a strong focus on the involvement of the EU cross-industry and sectoral social partners in EU policymaking and law-making. It comes up with a set of 10 recommendations for the strengthening of Social Dialogue, addressing the areas of raising the profile of social dialogue, improving the structures and processes of European Social Dialogue and support capacity building to benefit national social partners. The concrete recommendations are the following:

### On raising the profile of social dialogue

1. To create a new award for innovative social dialogue
2. A new programme for young future leaders

### On improving the structures and processes of European social dialogue

3. Greater involvement of social partners in the European Semester
4. Review the working of the Tripartite Social Summit and Social Dialogue
5. Improved consultation of social partners on new Commission initiatives
6. Fostering more European social partner agreements
7. Promotion of national registries for collective agreements

### On supporting capacity building to benefit national social partners

8. Take account of the great variations in the capacities of national social partners and provide access to funding via the new European Social Fund ESF+.
9. Improved exchange of experience and best practice
10. More dialogue on future oriented subjects, including debates on the future of work.

### Assessment:

The World Employment Confederation-Europe assesses the Report on strengthening EU social dialogue overall positively. Especially the focus on the involvement of EU cross-industry and sectoral social partners in the European Semester process, the consultation of social partners in the context of EU policymaking and lawmaking and the focus on capacity building is welcomed.

In January 2021, the World Employment Confederation-Europe signed a joint statement with 8 other social partners of the services sectors on strengthening social dialogue at EU level, which is intended to provide input to the report of Andrea Nahles and the related debates at EU level on strengthening social dialogue. Prior to that, the World Employment

Confederation-Europe contributed to several online events and discussions to shape the report.

## European Commission Economic Forecast Winter 2021

The European Commission published on 11 February its Winter European Economic Forecast. The economic forecast underlines that Europe remains in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic. The resurgence in the number of Covid-19 cases, together with the appearance of new, more contagious strains of the coronavirus, have forced many Member States to reintroduce or tighten containment measures. The Winter 2021 Economic Forecast projects that the euro area economy will grow by 3.8% in both 2021 and 2022.

After strong growth in the third quarter of 2020, economic activity contracted again in the fourth quarter as a second wave of the pandemic triggered renewed containment measures. With those measures still in place, the EU and euro area economies are expected to contract in the first quarter of 2021. Economic growth is set to resume in the spring and gather momentum in the summer as vaccination programmes progress and containment measures gradually ease. An improved outlook for the global economy is also set to support the recovery. The economic impact of the pandemic remains uneven across Member States and the speed of the recovery is also projected to vary significantly.

In terms of negative risks, the pandemic could prove more persistent or severe in the near-term than assumed in this forecast, or there could be delays in the roll-out of vaccination programmes. This could delay the easing of containment measures, which would in turn affect the timing and strength of the expected recovery. There is also a risk that the crisis could leave deeper scars in the EU's economic and social fabric, notably through widespread bankruptcies and job losses. This would also hurt the financial sector, increase long-term unemployment and worsen inequalities.

### Assessment and next steps:

The Economic Forecasts of the European Commission provide a valuable source to assess the economic and social impact of the pandemic. These are complemented by the analysis done by the World Employment Confederation on the impact of Covid-19 on the private employment services industry, such as the WEC Global Labour Market Factsheet 2020 and the European Employment Barometer.

## World Employment Confederation-Europe letter to Members of the European Parliament on work mobility

In the European Parliament, an own-initiative report on "impacts of EU rules on the free movements of workers and services: intra-EU labour mobility as a tool to match labour market needs and skills" has led to renewed discussions on the role of temporary agency work in fostering work mobility and on whether there is a need for stricter EU regulation on temporary agency work. A World Employment Confederation-Europe letter has been drafted to react to the European Parliament Report.

The World Employment Confederation-Europe has assessed the report and the amendments that have been tabled to it and prepared a letter to be sent to the Members of the European Parliament Employment and Social Affairs Committee. In the letter, the World Employment Confederation-Europe illustrates that temporary agency work is already appropriately and comprehensively regulated based on the EU Directive on temporary agency work, other EU Directives, and national law. The World Employment Confederation-Europe also calls for clearly differentiating between temporary agency work, other forms of labour market intermediation and subcontracting. Concrete voting recommendations for specific amendments are included in the letter.

#### Assessment and next steps:

Work mobility and related debates in the European Parliament especially in the Covid-19 context remain to be rather controversial and include certain challenges linked to calls for new or stricter regulation. On the positive side, it needs to be underlined that these calls have so far not been taken up by the European Commission and have not led to new policy or legislative initiatives. An ad-hoc WEC-Europe Taskforce set up in 2020 discussed the issue in several online meetings, identified a series of solutions to address the issue at national level and shaped a World Employment Confederation-Europe policy and advocacy line for the policy debates at European level. The Taskforce has therefore for the time being completed its current purpose and mandate and work mobility will continue to be addressed in discussions at the level of the European Public Affairs Committee.

#### WEC-Europe discusses AI with DG Connect

Following a letter WEC-Europe sent to European Commission Vice-President, Mrs. Vestager on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the employment services industry, a meeting was held with Lucilla Sioli (Director AI and Digital Industry at DGConnect) and Martin Ulbrich (senior policy expert). WEC-Europe explained concerns on the legislative AI ambitions of the EU in particular on (1.) the unfocussed high-risk approach in the employment space and (2.) the need to integrate AI in existing oversight mechanisms rather than building new ones.

Both points were taken well. The Commission highlighted it had 'progressed' from the broad high-risk approach in employment and recruitment to take a more focussed approach. Also, they did not align with the European Parliament perspective on creating a new European certificate on AI and indeed integrate AI in existing oversight. There was good in-depth discussion on the type of risks in recruitment as was identified in the letter and, we were able to highlight that private employment services are very much subject to oversight on the national level, and thus that no new infrastructures were needed.

There was good alignment on the need for the industry to test and train AI applications, but the Commission highlighted that this is still work in progress. But they'd welcome the industry participation as this discussion would further materialise. Generally, we had a good in-depth discussion on the topic and functioning of AI, and how to mitigate it. This allowed us to showcase WEC-Europe has the expertise to be of value add to the Commission as they move forward.

Finally, the Commission informed that the presentation of the regulatory proposal appears to be delayed to April (rather than somewhere during this 1<sup>st</sup> quarter).

### Assessment and next steps:

Concluding, the meeting provided some good news for the industry and allowed for Commission a platform for the priorities identified in the Taskforce. Of course, the Commission only has the legislative right to initiative. What the regulatory product will look like is very much in the hands of the European Parliament and the EU member states. That is where the advocacy efforts will increasingly focus on as the legislative process continues. This will be discussed further with the WEC-Europe Data Protection and AI Taskforce.

## Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
DG	Directorate General, policy department of the European Commission
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOE	International Organisation of Employers