

Contents

Global Public Affairs

SAVE THE DATE: ILO/WEC Webinar on Platform Work on 11 March (10:00 – 12:00 CET)

ILO presents report on Recruitment Fees & Costs	2
WEC and ITUC discuss joint research on Informality	3
OECD publishes report on Career Guidance	3
2021 G20 kicks off	4

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"

EU Project on Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry completed	5
Position Paper on EU Directive on minimum wages published	6
Advocacy on online talent platforms and diverse forms of work	6
UK – EU Trade and cooperation agreement signed	7
Covid-19: Recovery and resilience facility agreed at EU level	7
Joint statement of the EU Services Sectors Social Partners Strengthening sectoral social dialogue in the services industry: The all-important role of social partners in building a resilient Europe	8
New research published by Eurofound and the European Commission	9

Position Papers

Strengthening sectoral social dialogue in the services industry: The all-important role of social partners in building a resilient Europe – Joint Statement of the EU services sectors social partners

Position Paper on the EU Directive on minimum wages

Upcoming Events

18th February 2021

WEC-Europe Governing Body meeting to elect new President and Executive Committee

24th February 2021

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

11th March 2021

WEC/ILO Webinar on Platform Work

Upcoming Events

In case you have questions on the Advocacy Report:

WEC Head Office

Tel. +322 421 1586

info@wecglobal.org

www.wecglobal.org

Global Public Affairs

ILO presents report on Recruitment Fees & costs

As part of the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative, the ILO has prepared an international comparison on the regulation of recruitment fees and related costs. It has assessed policies from 90 countries, 18 bilateral migration agreements and 9 private initiatives (including the WEC Code of Conduct).

Key findings are the following:

- Prohibition of fee-charging is the dominant approach, mostly covering both domestic and cross-border recruitment.
- The regulatory status quo on 'related cost' is more ambiguous and mostly addresses cross-border situations.
- Regional differences apply. Europe prohibits fees consistently for all recruited workers, and the same predominantly goes for the Americas. While Asian/Pacific countries have a more murky approach with often special departments have been set up in that region to govern (outgoing) migration. In Africa the countries are split on the coverage of cross-border vs. all workers.
- Specific additional sectoral regulation of recruitment fees & costs is scarce, but mostly focused on agriculture, domestic work and construction.
- Only a minority of countries have adopted a detailed description of recruitment fees and related costs in their legislation
- Private Initiatives differentiate vastly on how (detailed) they define and/or audit the recruitment fees and related costs
- Workers usually are unable to deconstruct the breakdown of costs involved in their recruitment process.

Assessment and next steps:

Fighting recruitment fees and costs remains an important priority for the ILO as part of the Fair Recruitment Initiative. This research shows that on fees enforcement appears to be an important element of the fight as most countries have banned the charging of these fees. Although in Southeast Asia a more structural concern needs be identified with the strong involvement of governmental actors in cross border recruitment. Moreover, a rationalization of overarching business efforts as well as awareness amongst migrant workers remain challenging.

WEC supports the non-fee charging provision for direct recruitment costs, as stipulated in our Code of Conduct and enshrined in ILO Convention n°181 on private employment agencies.

WEC, IOE and ITUC discuss joint research on Informality and PrES

End of 2020, WEC put forward a proposal to the ILO for a research. The purpose is to investigate how regulatory frameworks on private employment services contribute to the transition to the formal economy. Although originally envisaged in the context of ILO Sectoral Activities, WEC, IOE, and ITUC agreed to shape a joint proposal and together put it to the ILO together outside of these Sectoral activities.

The proposal ties into the ILO Centenary Declaration as well as the ILO Recommendation 204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. This latter addresses the role of Employment Services as a means to deliver this transition, and the research proposal seeks to deep dive on the role of private employment services in this.

As this Advocacy Report goes to press, ITUC is in the process of reflecting upon the draft research proposal, following a call between WEC and ITUC leadership. In this call a overarching agreement was reached on the importance of the topic.

Assessment and next steps:

Informality is a key topic for WEC as well as to social partners in the ILO context. Private Employment Services are, albeit indirect, mentioned as a key instrument in fighting informality. By shaping a joint research, WEC, IOE and ITUC could push the ILO to better establish the positive connection and take this on board in their broader work on fighting informality.

OECD publishes report on Career Guidance in a changing world of work

The OECD has done an analysis on adult's experiences with Career Guidance. In Chile, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand and USA adults were questioned on their experiences with a career guidance advisors (from public, private, non-profit, social partner backgrounds). The report seeks to identify room for improvement for this guidance, also in the context of the expected labour market fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. Key findings and policy recommendations are the following:

- The results indicate there's substantial demand for career guidance, especially on 'looking for jobs' and 'finding training options'.
- People that already face a labour market disadvantage use career guidance less. E.g. people with lower education and that are in jobs that face higher degrees of automation are less likely to use career guidance. This results from a mix of attitudes towards career guidance, awareness of the services and the targeting of career guidance services.
- Most career guidance is often part of re-employment efforts by the Public Employment Service (PES).
- The reason for not using career guidance is because workers (especially older, less educated) feel they do not need it; that they are unaware of the service; or that they do not have the time for it.
- Those that have received career guidance are (very) satisfied with it.
- PES and private providers are two largest providers of career guidance. The guidance by PES is less satisfactory than those provided by employers and private providers.

- Career guidance provided by employers or employer associations is found to be linked to positive employment outcomes and provision by education and training providers is positively associated with participation in training programmes.
- Face-to-face is the most common form of guidance although new (remote) forms are being introduced. The pandemic has accelerated this trend and could impact those with lower digital literacy.
- Coordination on the provision of career management is challenge given the vast amount of players involved.
- Career guidance is heavily subsidized. Most recipients do not pay for it.

OECD Policy guidance on career guidance systems

- Expand availability of career guidance services (incl its resources), especially to those that need it most.
- Deliver career guidance through in a multichannel way
- Establish and strengthen centralized hubs where career guidance can be found, as well as financial support/ subsidies to fund it
- Raise awareness on career guidance, especially amongst disadvantaged groups.
- Establish quality standards as a condition to receive public funding
- Professionalise career guidance advisors
- Use high quality skills assessment and anticipation information
- Tailor career guidance to individual needs
- Monitor outcomes of the various providers and consider connecting outcomes on public funding
- Improve coordination of all actors
- Ensure adequate funding for adult career guidance
Incentivize employers and adults to contribute to the funding of career guidance, incl. through adding adult career guidance as an (tax deductible) expenditure for adult learning.

Assessment and next steps:

The research provides a good overview of the status quo on where career guidance policy stands and its adequateness to support the (changing) world of work. For the growing amount of Private Employment Services offering career guidance and management services this report provides input into the policy dimensions related to it. And – moreover – provides ample suggestions and support to strengthen national advocacy efforts to improve the quality and availability of (private) career services to adults in the context of lifelong learning.

2021 G20 kicks off

Italy has taken the helm of the G20. The Global G20 Summit, with rotating presidency, will this year be held on 30 and 31 October in Rome. Like every year this G20 Summit will integrate labour market policy recommendations from G20 employment ministers.

The Priorities of the Italian government are 'People, Plane, Profit' and focus on recovery from the Covid pandemic, strengthening multilateralism, fighting inequalities (esp. women and youth), promoting new jobs, social protection and food security, bridge digital divides, improve productivity and leave no one behind.

B20 Employment and Education

As part of the G20 process, the Italian business association Confindustria is presiding over the Business20 input to the G20 Leaders' Summit. A conception document for the 2021 Employment and Education Recommendations from the global business community has been produced. WEC, with the support of the WEC G20 Taskforce, will provide input into the process to promote the business voice integrates the industry's interest.

Assessment and next steps:

G20 conclusions serve as important indicators for government's priorities, and as such serve to define the mandate of key WEC stakeholders such the ILO and OECD. By engaging the process and coordinating a strong industry voice in the process, WEC seeks to ensure strong global policy support for private employment services.

European Public Affairs

EU Project on Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry completed

The two-year project of the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa on Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry has been completed in December 2020. The report, which provides case studies of social innovation in the area of training, working conditions and social protection, has been published. An on-line conference with policymakers and stakeholders has been organised to disseminate the findings. The conference included keynote speakers and panellists from the European Commission/DG Employment, the OECD and social partners as well as a thematic session during which several social innovation practices were presented.

The World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa furthermore issued a set of joint recommendations to promote new ways of working, learning and social protection.

The research report can be downloaded [here](#), the joint recommendations are available [here](#) and the presentations of the conference are available [here](#).

Assessment and next steps:

The project was instrumental to gain more insights and knowledge on social innovation practices in Europe and to discuss these with policymakers and stakeholders. The main case studies analysed in the project have also been integrated into the Social Innovation Stories website of the World Employment Confederation-Europe.

Position Paper on the EU Directive on minimum wages published in January 2021

After comprehensive discussions with World Employment Confederation-Europe members and an assessment of the European Commission proposal for a Directive on minimum wages, a World Employment Confederation-Europe position paper has been published in January 2021.

The World Employment Confederation-Europe starts its advocacy with a focus on the need to ensure appropriate protection for workers in diverse forms of work. For agency workers, this includes the principles of equal treatment and equal pay, minimum wages established at national level and approaches of Social Innovation, offering new solutions for working, learning and social protection. The World Employment Confederation-Europe remained critical on the legal instrument of a Directive as proposed by the European Commission, stressed the need for capacity building for national social partners and for avoiding too detailed / prescriptive EU norms on minimum wage adequacy, coverage and adaptation.

Assessment and next steps:

The Portuguese EU Council Presidency announced to put a strong focus on the Directive on minimum wages during its term until June 2021. Discussions in the Council working group have started and while a legal advice of the Council raised some issues on the legal instrument of a Directive on minimum wages, there is no majority in Council to reject the Directive

Advocacy on online talent platforms and diverse forms of work

In the European Parliament, a focus will be laid in the coming months on working conditions for online platform workers in preparation of a legislative initiative to be presented by the European Commission in Q4/2021. The debate is led by the French MEP Sylvie Brunet (MEP/Renew Europe/France) and Adam Kosa (MEP/EPP/Hungary). The World Employment Confederation-Europe contributes to this debate based on the joint research conducted with UNI-Europa on platform work and the joint recommendations signed. Furthermore, the WEC Position Paper on platform work is instrumental in this context. Main discussions linked to platform work focus on the employment status of people working via platforms, their social protection and working conditions as well as the use of artificial intelligence and algorithms.

End of February 2021, the World Employment Confederation-Europe intends to organize an online event with Members of the European Parliament, Commission officials, stakeholders and online talent platforms to provide a forum for discussion and shape the debate in the European Parliament. MEP Adam Kosa agreed to co-host such an event of the World Employment Confederation-Europe. In February 2021, the European Commission will launch a two-stage social partners consultation on working conditions of platform workers, providing further avenues for WEC-Europe to provide input.

Assessment and next steps:

Platform work and the working conditions for platform workers will continue to be a main topic of European and international policy debates in 2021. Based on its contribution and input to the discussions in the past years, the World Employment Confederation is recognised as an expert in this domain when it comes to online talent platforms. At the same

time, the World Employment Confederation-Europe aims not to get too much involved into the debates around accommodation and transport online platforms.

As next steps, the online event will be organised end of February and the World Employment Confederation-Europe will contribute to the EU Social Partners Consultation by issuing a position paper.

UK – EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement signed

On 24th December, the UK and the EU concluded their negotiations on a Trade and Cooperation agreement, aiming to settle the future EU – UK relations. This addressed topics such as work mobility and labour market matters, trade rules and tariffs and fishery policy. The agreement is essential to avoid a hard, unregulated Brexit as of 1st of January 2021. The World Employment Confederation-Europe issued a Brexit Briefing in early January 2021 and the UK World Employment Confederation-Europe member REC also issued a statement. The agreement reached has been provisionally entered into force, while it still has to be approved by the European Parliament.

Assessment and next steps:

Having reached a trade and +cooperation agreement between the UK and the EU was an important step to ensure legal certainty and to avoid an unregulated Brexit. However, the practical implications of the agreement with regard to private employment services industry, work mobility and the provision of services remain to be assessed. Also World Employment Confederation-Europe's UK member REC confirmed that it is currently still too early to assess the practical and business implications of the agreement reached.

Covid-19: Recovery and resilience facility agreed at EU level

A strong focus in EU policy continues to be put on the Covid-19 response and on policies to support the economic and social recovery. In December 2020, the European Commission and the EU Council reached a political agreement on the next Generation EU Recovery and resilience facility and the next EU multi-annual financial framework. The overall, EU budget agreement amounts to € 1.8 trillion.

The EU's long-term budget, coupled with NextGenerationEU, the temporary instrument designed to boost the recovery, will be the largest stimulus package ever financed through the EU budget. A total of €1.8 trillion will help rebuild a post-COVID-19 Europe. It will be a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. The new long-term budget will increase flexibility mechanisms to guarantee it has the capacity to address unforeseen needs. It is a budget fit not only for today's realities but also for tomorrow's uncertainties.

Main elements of the agreement

- More than 50% of the amount will support modernisation, for example through: microscope research and innovation.
- Fair climate and digital transitions, via the Just Transition Fund and the Digital Europe Programme.

- Preparedness, recovery and resilience, via the Recovery and Resilience Facility, rescEU and a new health programme, EU4Health.

The financial means available via the Recovery and Resilience facility is available on the European Commission website. The access to the financial means of the recovery and resilience facility is done via the EU Member States and national governments.

Assessment and next steps:

The agreement on the next EU multi-annual financial framework and the recovery and resilience facility provides a key framework to boost economic growth and recovery. World Employment Confederation-Europe members who are interested to apply for funding from the EU level are advised to get in touch with their national governments. Preliminary information is available on the mentioned website and in the World Employment Confederation-Europe guidance and playbook on access to EU funding.

Joint statement of the EU Services Sectors Social Partners Strengthening sectoral social dialogue in the services industry: The all-important role of social partners in building a resilient Europe

The European Services' social partners – including the World Employment Confederation-Europe – adopted a joint statement highlighting the all-important role of social partners in building a resilient Europe and reiterated their commitment to keep on strengthening sectoral social dialogue in the services industry.

The Joint Statement - signed by UNI Europa, WEC Europe, Insurance Europe, EBF, Coiffure EU, CoESS, EFCI, EuroCommerce and ETNO - highlights that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the services' sectors have proven their importance and enabled our economies and societies to keep going. At European level, sectoral social dialogue of the services sectors has provided the framework for the discussion and adoption of joint statements, recommendations, guidelines and proved to be an essential channel to communicate sectoral needs to the European institutions.

Services' social partners emphasised the importance of a constructive sectoral social dialogue. Sectoral social dialogue was instrumental in engaging common discussions in the sectors on the consequences for the 'after Covid-19' world of work as well as the requirements for recovery. The joint signatories seek to exchange further with the European Commission on how to strengthen it during these critical times and make several suggestions to make the most out of the European sectoral social dialogue.

Assessment and next steps:

The agreement on the Joint Statement of the EU Services Sectors Social Partners on Strengthening sectoral social dialogue in the services industry: The all-important role of social partners in building a resilient Europe is a first, important European public affairs achievement in 2021. While discussions started in 2020, the agreement reached in January was very timely to provide input to a report prepared by Andrea Nahles, special advisor to Nicolas Schmit on the EU Social Dialogue. The Joint Statement will be followed-up by meeting request of the services sectors social partners with Andrea Nahles.

New research published by Eurofound and the European Commission

Two important research reports have been published in the past weeks, which are of interest to World Employment Confederation members:

- The European Commission published a report on intra-EU labour mobility, which looks at trends in labour mobility and which showing that labour mobility is up by 1.2 with 17.9 million Europeans move and work in other EU countries. The report also looks at the return mobility and the impact of the UK withdrawal from the EU on mobility.
- Eurofound, the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions has published a new report on "New forms of work in Europe – How new is the new?". The report shows that traditional forms of employment are not just replaced by new forms of work, but that employment becomes more diverse and that policies must be more tailored. The European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions has conducted a mapping of new forms of employment in the EU and in Norway.

Abbreviations

EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
UK	United Kingdom