



European Economic  
and Social Committee

Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship/Labour Market Observatory

## Study of the Labour Market Observatory (LMO)

**The EU on the path to reaching the headline 2030 employment and training targets: the views of social partners and civil society organisations in a selection of EU Member States**

### COUNTRY REPORT SWEDEN



September 2025

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the views of Swedish social partners and civil society organisations consulted by the Labour Market Observatory (LMO) as part of its study on progress towards the EU 2030 employment and training targets. The consultation was based on a survey and discussions held during the LMO mission to Stockholm on 18–19 November 2024. The recommendations put forward by consulted organisations reflect the views of some stakeholders but not necessarily all.

### 2. EMPLOYMENT TARGET

Sweden's national employment target of 82% exceeds the EU's 78% benchmark and has been met in recent years. Sweden's well-developed social infrastructure – in particular accessible childcare and elderly care – contributes to high employment.

Despite high overall employment, Sweden continues to face significant unemployment, particularly among individuals with no or only lower secondary education, young people, those over 55, non-EU migrants with low education or limited language skills, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ individuals.

Key challenges to raising Sweden's employment rate include skill mismatches, low motivation to work or train (partly due to narrow gaps between benefits and wages), limited geographical mobility, and insufficient tools within public employment services to activate jobseekers, particularly those furthest from the labour market.

**Policies for improving employment and adult training** include investments in vocational education, a wage subsidy scheme, a wage floor for migrant workers, a new action plan to support LGBTIQ inclusion in working life, and support for entrepreneurship. The Swedish labour market is known for good pay and working conditions. The main challenge is not job quality, but ensuring that more people receive the support they need to enter employment. While many robust initiatives exist, they are often local or short term; stakeholders welcome the renewed role of the Public Employment Service.

**Recommendations:** Raising Sweden's employment rate requires a long-term strategy focused on under-represented groups – such as low-skilled individuals, migrants, young people, older people, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ people – through improved access to training, stronger basic and vocational education, a better match between training and labour market needs, targeted Public Employment Service support, and incentives to work. Additional efforts should include enhancing mobility within the country, supporting entrepreneurship, tailoring policies to the specific needs of marginalised groups, and expanding inclusive tools such as wage subsidies and work-based learning opportunities.

**Engagement of social partners and civil society organisations:** All organisations consulted agreed that employment and training policies gained legitimacy and stability when anchored with social partners – who play an active role in shaping labour market policy in Sweden – and with civil society organisations, which contribute through advocacy, consultation, and cooperation with public authorities.

**Recommendations** include strengthening the involvement of social partners in shaping labour market policies, raising awareness of their contributions, ensuring respect for their autonomous role in wage-setting, and providing adequate compensation for the resource-intensive support they provide to public authorities; civil society organisations should also be actively engaged in policy planning and implementation.

**Examples of successful initiatives** include ‘**establishment jobs**’ and Samstart, and the work of the TSL Job Transition Foundation.

### **3. ADULT TRAINING TARGET**

Sweden has already exceeded the EU’s 60% adult training participation target, with 73.9% of adults engaged in learning (2022). Yet challenges persist in ensuring long-term skills supply, especially amid digitalisation, demographic shifts, and the green transition. Barriers remain for marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ individuals, due to accessibility issues and lack of tailored support.

**Recommendations** focus on improving access to and participation in adult training, particularly for under-represented groups, by ensuring targeted support, addressing discrimination, and enhancing outreach and guidance. Efforts should also include aligning training with labour market needs by stepping up employer and industry involvement, improving school performance, increasing the efficiency of public training funds, and establishing clear mechanisms to monitor progress towards the adult learning target.

**Engagement of social partners and civil society organisations:** Social partners play a vital role in shaping and supporting adult learning and labour market policies through policy development, advisory roles, and joint initiatives such as transition organisations, yet greater recognition and awareness of their contributions are still needed.

**Examples of successful initiatives** include Transition Study Support and the ‘Learning Chain’ (Lärkedjan).

### **4. LEVEL OF INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYMENT AND ADULT TRAINING, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPACT OF THE EPSR ACTION PLAN**

Sweden’s Recovery and Resilience Plan and ESF+ programme aim to foster lifelong learning, support job transitions, and improve access to employment for those furthest from the labour market, including persons with disabilities, newly arrived migrants, and the long-term unemployed. While financial resources are not lacking, stakeholders highlighted that rigid budget structures within the Public Employment Service limit the effective use of funds, and called for political action to allow greater flexibility in reallocating resources.

Overall, the added value of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) is perceived as neutral to low by the social partners and civil society organisations involved in the study. Awareness of the Action Plan appears to be generally limited, and its impact is perceived as low – likely due to Sweden’s already strong performance in areas such as employment and adult learning, as well as its well-established social policies.

# COUNTRY REPORT SWEDEN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the perspectives of social partners and civil society organisations who participated in the consultation conducted by the Labour Market Observatory (LMO) in Sweden, as part of its study *The EU on the path to reaching the headline 2030 employment and training targets: the views of social partners and civil society organisations in a selection of EU Member States*.

The consultation was conducted via a survey and discussions held during the LMO mission to Stockholm on 18–19 November 2024. The EESC members who took part in the mission were Christian Ardhe, Bogdan Preda, Berivan Öngörür, Benny Johansson and Jan Torsten Andersson.

The organisations who contributed – to whom we extend our sincere thanks – are the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv – SN), the Swedish Construction Federation (Byggförretagen), the Industrial Employers' Association (Industriarbetsgivarna), the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige – LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation – TCO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sveriges akademikers centralorganisation – SACO), the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (Riksförbundet för homosexuellas, bisexuellas, transpersoners, queeras och intersexpersoners rättigheter – RFSL) and its Youth branch (RFSL Ungdom), the Swedish Disability Rights Federation (Funktionsträtt Sverige) and Participation, Action, Freedom of Movement (Delaktighet, Handlingskraft, Rörelsefrihet - DHR).

The report highlights achievements and ongoing challenges in employment and adult training and presents views and recommendations for improvement put forward by the organisations consulted. They may reflect the position of one or more stakeholders, but not necessarily all.

## 2. EMPLOYMENT TARGET

### 2.1. Introductory context

According to the EU 2030 headline target, 78% of the population aged 20–64 should be in employment<sup>1</sup>. Sweden has translated this target into a national goal of 82%, which the country has met for several years; however, in 2024, the employment rate declined slightly to 81.9%, down from 82.6% in 2023.

In 2024, the employment rate for women was 79.9% (EU average: 70.8%), marking a slight decline from the previous year. For young people aged 15–29, the employment rate stood at 55.3% (EU average: 49.6%), down from 57.2% in 2023.

The unemployment rate among adults aged 20–64 rose in 2024, reaching 7.1%, which is higher than the EU average of 5.7%. Among young people aged 15–29, the unemployment rate stood at 17.3% – well above the EU average of 11.4%—and has increased since 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> [The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) – COM(2021) 102 final

## 2.2. Policies for increasing the employment rate and their effectiveness – progress and challenges

Sweden's employment rate is high compared to many other EU countries, largely due to its well-developed and affordable child and elderly care services. The labour market shows strong demand for highly skilled workers, with notable shortages in trained professionals such as engineers, IT specialists, nurses and other qualified roles.

Despite high employment, Sweden also faces significant **unemployment**, particularly among:

- **Individuals with no or only lower secondary education,**
- **Young people and those over 55 years old,**
- **Non-EU migrants** with low education levels or inadequate Swedish and/or English language skills,
- **Persons with disabilities** that limit their work capacity,
- **LGBTIQ individuals**, especially transgender people, who are more likely to be distant from the labour market and overrepresented in low-wage jobs.

It is in principle among these groups that there is scope for further increases in the employment rate.

**Migrants →** In Sweden, one key challenge is closing the significant employment gap – around 13.8% – between native-born Swedes and non-EU migrants, especially among women. Non-EU-born young people face nearly double the rates of early school leaving and NEET status compared to their Swedish-born peers. Integration is slow due to complex systems, delays in diploma validation, and some discrimination. Migrants are sometimes overqualified for the jobs they hold. Still, from an international perspective, their employment rate in Sweden remains relatively high.

Labour migration is an important issue for business. Employers' representatives argued that companies, not politicians, should determine the need for migrant workers.

Programmes for foreign-born individuals include mentorship initiatives by trade unions and active support from civil society organisations.

**Young people →** Fewer young people are choosing to pursue industrial jobs that involve apprenticeships.

**Persons with disabilities →** The employment rate for persons with disabilities remains low – only 52% – reflecting a persistent gap compared to the general population. Barriers include inaccessible workplaces and a lack of knowledge/understanding of disabilities. Support from job centres has declined due to budget cuts, increased digitalisation, and staff reductions. Specialised advisors and psychologists are no longer available, leading many to give up due to long wait times. Misconceptions persist among employers that hiring people with disabilities is costly or not worthwhile. However, supported employment schemes offer effective tools and have shown success.

**Women →** Nearly half of women in blue-collar occupations work part time. To tackle labour shortages, full time should be the norm for all skilled workers.

**LGBTIQ →** LGBTIQ people face discrimination in both employment and education, with transgender and bisexual individuals particularly vulnerable to harassment and bullying, according to studies cited by organisations met. LGBTIQ migrants also face added precarity due to their legal status. Although the government introduced a new LGBTIQ action plan running until 2027, the 2024 budget included no new funding and proposed cuts from 2026. Additional funding is not expected until 2027, leaving current initiatives underfunded.

**Key challenges to raising Sweden's employment rate include:**

- skills mismatches.
- low motivation to work or train – partly due to small gaps between benefits and wages. The government is making some efforts to strengthen the incentives to work, such as the new job tax deduction. Employer organisations support such tax deductions, but some trade unions cite the 2024 Fiscal Policy Council review, which found that additional deductions have limited impact on employment.
- limited geographical mobility. Many vacancies are in the north, but few, including young people and persons with disabilities, are willing to relocate despite low unemployment there.
- public employment services' lack of adequate tools to activate jobseekers and focus on those furthest from the labour market.

**Policies mentioned by the organisations consulted:**

Investments are being made in education, including pilot projects for a new National Vocational School at upper secondary level. From 2025, a legal change will align upper secondary education more closely with labour market needs.

Wage subsidies for employment are often highly effective, as they lower barriers for individuals struggling to enter the labour market.

A key reform in 2023 introduced a wage floor for migrant workers, requiring them to earn at least 80% of the median salary to obtain a work permit. The reform is aimed at combating exploitation and encouraging migrants already in Sweden to take available jobs. It does not apply to EU citizens or seasonal workers.

In January 2025, the government announced a new action plan for an inclusive and equal society. The action plan aims to further strengthen efforts to support rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people by consolidating and supplementing these efforts; one of the focuses is working life.

There are many robust employment initiatives in Sweden, but, according to the organisations consulted, they are often local or short-term. The Public Employment Service's renewed responsibility for supporting those in need is widely welcomed.

**Quality employment** – The Swedish labour market is known for good pay and working conditions. The main challenge is not job quality, but ensuring that more people receive the support needed to enter employment. Social partners have created entry-level jobs through collective agreements, offering better-quality opportunities for the long-term unemployed and helping ensure fair and secure working conditions.

**Entrepreneurship** – Aspiring entrepreneurs receive support with business plans, advice, and start-up grants, with additional funding available for persons with disabilities to cover start-up costs.

### 2.3. Recommendations for increasing the employment rate

Raising Sweden's employment rate requires a longer-term strategy and targeted efforts to improve employment among under-represented groups, including low-skilled individuals, migrants, young people, older people, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ people.

- Stronger investment in education and training and improvement of the **matching between skills and the labour market needs**. Quality basic education must be ensured as a foundation for adult learning. More people need to choose vocational paths in both upper secondary and adult education, as social partners agree this is key to reducing skill mismatches. Adult and vocational education should be expanded and better aligned with labour market needs. Employers are expected to increase the availability of work-based learning opportunities within adult education. A key challenge for education providers remains securing enough workplace placements for their students.
- More unemployed individuals should be in regular education, often starting with basic-level training. **Expanding the Swedish Public Employment Service's vocational training offer** would improve job prospects for jobseekers and help employers meet recruitment needs.
- **The Public Employment Service should offer more effective personalised assistance** to find employment or enter education, including enhanced support for those with disabilities.
- **The incentives to take a job**, in place of unemployment allowances, should be increased.
- **To boost mobility within the country**, it is important to ensure access to adequate services – such as housing, schools, healthcare, and leisure facilities – to attract and retain workers. This requires coherent policies, including support for municipalities in regions that have job opportunities but lack housing and essential services, for example through streamlined construction permits.
- **Entrepreneurship and innovation should be supported**, including through comprehensive tax reform.
- **Youth →** To engage young people in industry, jobs must be made more attractive – for example by offering flexible hours – alongside improving the appeal of vocational training and balancing labour market needs with individual preferences.
- **LGBTIQ →** Awareness of LGBTIQ+ people's specific conditions and challenges in the labour market needs to be strengthened to make inclusion a clearer part of employment policy. Skills-enhancing measures are needed across the business sector, public sector, and trade unions.
- **Women →** Efforts are needed to break gender stereotypes – for example, one organisation launched a project specifically supporting women carpenters.
- **Migrants →** should receive greater support, along with systematic follow-up of their career paths to learn from their experiences and improve integration measures.
- **Persons with disabilities →** Organisations highlight the need for better data, as current figures may understate the challenges. Work environments must be adapted to both physical and psychological needs, with better legislation and inspections. Public employment services should be more accessible and better equipped to support both jobseekers and employers. Employers need greater awareness of discrimination and should simplify recruitment processes to accommodate diverse needs. More flexible options – such as part-time jobs and tailored support – are essential, along with creative solutions beyond traditional pathways like day centres. Public procurement can also be used strategically to promote inclusion. Wage subsidies for employment remain an effective tool for easing access to the labour market for persons with disabilities.

### 2.4. Engagement of social partners and civil society organisations and recommendations

All organisations consulted agreed that employment and training policies gain **legitimacy and stability** when they have firm roots with social partners, in particular, and also with civil society organisations.



In Sweden, social partners play an active role in shaping labour market policies, though they are less involved in implementation – except for the ‘establishment jobs’, where they have been key drivers (see below).

They participate in various labour market councils and advisory bodies, such as the Swedish Public Employment Service’s Labour Market Council, IFAU’s reference group, and Statistics Sweden’s user council. They also act as consultative bodies in labour market investigations. Trade unions and employers’ organisations negotiate wages and working conditions without state interference. Broad consensus often exists on the value of work, the need for training, and adapting to structural changes, with shared demands presented to the government.

Social partners co-own outplacement organisations that support those made redundant (see below); they also maintain regular dialogue with ministers, state secretaries, and parliament members, working together constructively.

As regards CSO involvement, organisations representing persons with disabilities, for example, have successfully raised awareness of the challenges faced at job centres. They actively engaged with the minister and state secretary responsible, advocating for improvements. RFSL contributed to the LGBTIQ action plan as a referral body and is regularly invited to hearings and consultations. They maintain dialogue with public authorities and collaborate with trade unions.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Further step up social partners’ involvement in the formulation of labour market policies and improve awareness of the social partners and their contribution.
- Ensure that trade unions are adequately compensated for their contributions to the work of public authorities, such as the Swedish Public Employment Service and the Migration Agency, as their involvement is resource-intensive and supports the effective implementation of labour market policies.
- Ensure that labour market policies respect the role of the social partners, particularly the autonomous wage-setting model (‘the parties set the wages, not the policy’), and give due consideration to their views.
- Civil society organisations representing communities should also be actively involved in planning and implementation.

### **2.5. Examples of successful initiatives in employment**

#### **‘Establishment jobs’ ([Etableringsjobb](#))**

Establishment jobs are a support model combining work and education for up to two years, praised by social partners as an effective way to promote employment. Introduced through a collective agreement – which defines which occupations are eligible – they target long-term unemployed people (over two years) and newly arrived migrants. Employers pay a low base salary, with the state covering the rest to meet the collective agreement’s minimum wage. Participants can attend Swedish language and short vocational courses during work hours without salary deductions. The model benefits employers through subsidised labour and access to talent, while participants gain experience, skills, and a strong chance of securing permanent, full-time employment. The goal is always to transition into a permanent, full-time employment contract with the employer after the two-year period.



**Samstart** is a national Swedish initiative supporting young people with disabilities (aged 16–29) in their transition from school to work. Launched in 2019 and running through 2027, it is led by the Public Employment Service in partnership with around 140 municipalities and funded primarily by the European Social Fund. Multidisciplinary teams – including employment officers, supported employment consultants (SIUS), and municipal staff – provide early, continuous, personalised support. Students are identified while still in school and receive tailored transition plans, with the same caseworker continuing after graduation to ensure continuity. SIUSs assist with job placement and integration. Samstart promotes shared practices, local flexibility, and national standards to guarantee equal access to employment support across Sweden.

#### **Field visit to the office of Trygghetsfonden TSL (TSL Job Transition Foundation) - Best practice**

**TSL Job Transition** was highlighted by the organisations consulted as an excellent initiative to boost both employment and adult training. Founded in 2004 through a collective agreement between the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv), TSL supports blue-collar workers in the private sector who are made redundant due to organisational changes. It covers 2 million employees across 80 000 companies. There are some 17 job transition organisations, each one implementing solutions specific to their sector.

TSL offers job coaching, matching, training, and support – at no cost to the individual – to help people quickly move into new employment, start a business, or begin studies. Each person is assigned one of 250 personal job coaches, often at the workplace, who assist with applications, CVs, interviews, and contact with authorities. Training and skills validation are offered when needed, with 25% of participants receiving vocational education.

People aged 40+ may receive severance pay (AGB), and those pursuing longer courses of study get career guidance and income-supporting financial aid. TSL collaborates with 1 000 union representatives, 4 000–5 000 employers, 33 recruitment agencies, and 40 internal staff. In 2024, over 85% of participants found new jobs within a year – 81% in roles equal to or better than their previous positions.

One of the key strengths of the Swedish job transition model, including TSL, is that support often begins before individuals become unemployed, allowing for a smoother and faster transition to new employment, training, or entrepreneurship.

### **3. ADULT TRAINING TARGET**

#### **3.1. Introductory context**

The EU's 2030 headline target calls for 60% of adults (25–64 year olds) to participate in training each year. This target was set taking into account the data from the 2016 Adult Education Survey (AES). According to that AES, 37.4 % of adults (25–64 year olds) in the EU had had a learning experience in the 12 months prior to the survey –excluding guided on-the-job training. The rate reached 43.7% of adults in the EU with guided on-the-job training included.

Sweden adopted the 60% goal at national level and has exceeded it for many years. In 2022, 66.5% of Swedes aged 25–64 participated in formal or non-formal education and training in the 12 months prior to the AES survey – excluding guided on-the-job training<sup>2</sup> – compared to 39.5% in the EU as a whole.

### 3.2. Policies for increasing the rate of participation in adult training and their effectiveness – progress and challenges

Sweden meets the 60% adult education target but, like many countries, faces the challenge of ensuring long-term skills supply. An ageing population, rapid technological change, and the green transition are reshaping labour market needs, requiring a more relevant and flexible education and training system.

Despite inclusion efforts, some groups still face barriers to training access. Job centre training is often not well adapted for persons with disabilities. LGBTIQ people, particularly transgender individuals, face discrimination in education and may struggle with outdated school records tied to former identities. Greater awareness is needed.

### 3.3. Recommendations for increasing adult training participation rates

- **Improve outreach** to under-represented groups: make sure that low-skilled adults, migrants and older workers have better access to training and fewer barriers to joining. It is necessary to attract the least qualified adults who are usually the most resistant to participation in training.
- **Raise awareness about any possible discrimination and specific barriers** to training, as for example in the case of LGBTIQ people.
- Improve the working conditions (salary and work environment) of skilled workers, to **motivate** workers to upgrade their skills.
- **Provide targeted support to adults** undertaking training, including wage contributions, and ensure that those further from the labour market receive enhanced assistance from the Public Employment Service, both online and in person.
- Provide a **relevant and flexible adult training offer** that meets the labour market's needs. Development efforts are ongoing in this area, accompanied by political-level discussions on strategic options and future directions.
- **Step up the involvement of industry** in shaping vocational education and training to ensure it aligns with current and future labour market needs.
- Strengthen study and career **guidance** to help individuals make well-informed choices about their education and career paths.
- Improve **school performance** to ensure students are better prepared for further studies and lifelong learning, with targeted investment in key areas such as reading, writing, and STEM.
- **Encourage employers** to actively contribute to workforce development by supporting training opportunities for their employees.
- Increase **resource efficiency** as regards state-funded training.
- Clarify how progress towards the adult learning target will be **measured and monitored** to ensure effective follow-up and accountability.

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<sup>2</sup> [Eurostat special extraction](#) of adults' participation rate in learning during the past 12 months, excluding guided on-the-job training, from the Adult Education Survey. Adult training data is based on the Adult Education Survey, which excludes four types of non-formal learning activities from data collection: courses; workshops or seminars; guided on-the-job training (planned periods of education, instruction or training directly at the workplace, organised by the employer with the aid of an instructor); private lessons. Thus, the data does not fully reflect the realities of the learning activities undertaken.

### 3.4. Engagement of social partners and civil society organisations and recommendations

Social partners play a **key role** in advancing issues important to their member organisations, particularly in adult learning. They actively follow, develop and evaluate policies, sit on advisory boards of education providers and authorities, and engage politically through referrals, meetings, and reference groups. They take part in sectoral councils to assess skills needs and jointly advocate for state action. At national level, they contribute to adult education through the National Programme Councils of the National Agency for Education.

As mentioned above regarding the TSL Job Transition, the social partners also jointly run transition organisations that support people, including through targeted training.

It is vital for politicians and authorities to recognise the value of strong cooperation with social partners. They offer deep knowledge of their members and help implement and legitimise decisions. However, awareness of their role and contributions has declined and needs to be reinforced.

### 3.5. Examples of successful initiatives in adult training

**Transition Study Support** provides targeted study support for workers with the aim of providing them with opportunities to further develop and strengthen their position on the labour market. The advantage is that people receive up to 80% of their salary.

This scheme was introduced in 2022 as part of a historic ‘Main Agreement’ on skills development, transition and employment protection, which was concluded by the social partners following national cross-sectoral negotiations. The agreement in principle was initially established between three parties in the private sector; since then, it has expanded and now covers most of the labour market.

The scheme will be of great benefit in terms of employees’ job security, as it will improve their opportunities to up- or re-skill in the labour market. It will also benefit the companies by developing a more productive and skilled workforce. The introduction of this support has been fraught with problems, partly as a result of the complexity of the regulatory framework and higher than expected interest in the aid.

Provided that the processing of the support is improved and speeded up, and that the training offer is developed to better meet the needs of workers, the organisations consulted by the EESC see great potential in the transition study support as an enabler for more people to adapt and develop their skills during working life.

**Lärkedjan (The learning chain)** – This project was mentioned as a good example by organisations representing persons with disabilities, which believe that such projects could be expanded. Lärkedjan is a Stockholm-based apprenticeship programme for young adults with mild intellectual disabilities. It trains participants to become service assistants in elder care, combining classroom learning and work-based training. The project is led by the City of Stockholm’s adult education (Komvux) and labour market departments. It runs from 2024 to 2028 and is funded by the Social Investment Fund. Participants study one day a week and work in elder care the rest of the week. They follow the national care assistant vocational track with formal validation. Employers provide adapted roles and clear task structures to support inclusion. The project leads to stable employment and long-term integration into the labour market.

#### **4. LEVEL OF INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYMENT AND ADULT TRAINING, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPACT OF EPSR ACTION PLAN**

The Swedish Recovery and Resilience Plan contains an ambitious reform with the objective of: (i) **fostering lifelong learning**; (ii) making it easier for people to switch jobs; and (iii) making it easier for people without experience to get a job.

The Swedish European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) programme specifically aims to activate those people who are still **furthest away from the labour market**, including persons with disabilities, newly arrived migrants and long-term unemployed people.

The organisations met by the EESC delegation noted that there is no overall shortage of financial resources. The key issue lies in **enabling the Public Employment Service to redistribute funds more effectively** within the framework of government labour market policy. Limited flexibility and restrictions on transferring funds between different budget lines hinder more efficient use of resources; overcoming this will require political decisions.

Overall, the added value of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) is perceived as neutral to low by the social partners and civil society organisations involved in the study. Awareness of the Action Plan appears to be generally limited, and its overall impact is perceived as low – likely due to Sweden’s already strong performance in areas such as employment and adult learning, as well as its well-established social policies.