

**EN**

**Priorities and working methods
of the Labour Market Observatory (LMO)
in the 2023 – 2025 half-term of office**

1. **Background information**

The Labour Market Observatory (LMO) was set up in 2007[[1]](#footnote-1) with the **mandate** to "identify and analyse labour market trends and challenges, bringing added value to the work of the SOC section and the Committee". The Observatory operates within, and reports to, the SOC section and carries out the following activities:

* observing labour market challenges and trends;
* collecting examples of best practices;
* stimulating discussion by organising hearings with institutional and socio-professional stakeholders, civil society organisations and academia;
* producing pro-active investigative reports or studies on selected topics;
* analysing cross-cutting issues.

The LMO is composed of **24 members** (see Appendix 1), including a president and two vice-presidents, rotating every two and a half years between the three groups. The current **president is Carlos Manuel Trindade (Portugal, Group II). The vice-presidents are Lech Pilawski (Poland, Group I) and Kinga Joó (Hungary, Group III)**.

Following the EESC Bureau decision of 21 February 2023, **a sub-group of the Labour Market Observatory was set up to coordinate EESC activities relating to the European Year of Skills**. The sub-group is composed of nine members, of which six are members of the Labour Market Observatory (see Appendix 1). The president of the sub-group is **Michael McLoughlin (Ireland, Group III)**.The sub-group could be convened on LMO meeting days, additionally inviting any sub-group members who are not members of the LMO.

1. **Main priorities for the 2023-2025 LMO term of office**

The LMO priorities are drawn up within the framework of the SOC section's priorities[[2]](#footnote-2) and the manifesto put forward by EESC president Oliver Röpke[[3]](#footnote-3). The LMO's activities will also need to adapt to new circumstances, if any, and to new initiatives by the European institutions, especially after the election of a new European Parliament and European Commission in 2024.

It is proposed that the Observatory focuses on the following **main themes during 2023-2025**.

1. **A labour market for all**, which offers equal opportunities to all, and harnesses everybody's talent, creativity and productivity. Integrating more people into the labour market is nowadays a matter of urgency, in order to tackle unemployment and inactivity, labour force shortages, promote social inclusion and ensure the sustainability of social security systems in the context of an ageing workforce. The inclusiveness of the labour market is particularly important given the significant impact of demographic change and the twin green and digital transitions on the world of work and the need to ensure a just transition.

The LMO will pay particular attention to:

* **the labour market integration of women, young people and NEETs** (young people neither in employment, education or training – with more than 8 million NEETs in the EU), **the entry into the workforce of the** **economically inactive**, and **further reducing unemployment and fostering entrepreneurship**. It will cooperate with the dedicated SOC groups regarding integration into the labour market of **people with a migrant** **background** (notably, people from Ukraine) **or ethnic background** (especially Roma) and of **persons with disabilities**.
* **the sectors that are particularly affected by labour shortages**, including the healthcare sector, especially in the context of an ageing population.
* **the future of work in the digital era –** andnotably working conditions, the safeguarding of collective rights and the strengthening of social dialogue in **the platform economy**[[4]](#footnote-4) as well as trends in non-standard work, artificial intelligence, algorithm management and robotisation.The LMO will try to contribute to the ongoing work of European institutions on this matter, given that the Council adopted its general approach on the Commission's proposal for a *Directive on improving working conditions in platform work* on 12 June 2023[[5]](#footnote-5) and that negotiations with the Parliament are expected.
* **the review of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan in 2025.** The Commission has already put forward several actions based on each principle of the Pillar, and EU Member States presented their national targets on 16 June 2022[[6]](#footnote-6). The Commission's review of the Action Plan in 2025 will show where the EU stands as regards the 2030 EU targets related to employment, training and reducing poverty. In its own field, the LMO will aim to contribute to this review in a timely manner, reflecting whether further actions and a new action plan would be needed to achieve the 2030 EU targets.
1. **Skills development, especially in the context of the European Year of Skills 2023 and beyond**

Skills development is a dynamic policy that will determine the future of Europe.The development of workers' skills and competences is crucial to ensure a fair and just green transition, to adapt to the digital age, and to create new opportunities for people and the economy. Skills shortages and mismatches have become a major challenge in many Member States, and three quarters of companies in the EU report difficulties in finding workers with the skills they need.

The topic of skills development and lifelong learning will be specifically dealt with by the LMO via **the sub-group on the coordination of EESC's activities for the European Year of Skills (EYS)**, and the three non-LMO members of the sub-group would be involved in all relevant LMO activities.

The coordination group will in particular:

* provide information, comments and suggestions on how to improve skills policies;
* make concrete proposals for meetings and events, where EESC members can be actively involved;
* encourage sections and the CCMI to organise debates in the context of the EYS, in their specific areas of work;
* continue, and if possible, enhance, cooperation with Cedefop, and will contribute to the joint policy learning forum on upskilling pathways aimed at supporting low skilled and low-qualified adults to upskill and integrate into the labour market;
* will support the EESC president in his activities related to the European Year of Skills and in organising a public event on skills;
* request that an Information Report be drawn up on the EESC's involvement in the European Year of Skills.

More details on the planned activities of the coordination group on the EYS can be found in Appendix number 2.

1. The principle of **democracy at work** will be considered as cross-cutting in the work of the LMO, which will promote the importance of **collective bargaining and social dialogue and the proper involvement of social partners** in all policies related to the labour market and skills. This is particularly timely, as the Council recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU, adopted on 12 June 2023[[7]](#footnote-7), will need to be implemented in the Member States.

As already stated by the EESC, democracy at work as a guiding concept should cover all workers and types of work as well as all workplaces, be they private, public or social in nature, irrespective of size, sector or other organisational aspects. The circumstances of SMEs should be considered. Empirical evidence shows that workers' voices offer the flexibility and room for manoeuvre necessary at workplace level in order to adapt to structural changes[[8]](#footnote-8).

Principle 8 of the European Pillar of Social Rights states that the social partners are to be consulted on the design and implementation of economic, employment and social policies according to national practices. They are also to be encouraged to negotiate and conclude collective agreements in matters relevant to them, while respecting their autonomy and the right to take collective action. The Pillar of Social Rights also states that support to increase the capacity of the social partners to promote social dialogue is to be encouraged. The Porto Social Commitment[[9]](#footnote-9) further called on all relevant actors to promote autonomous social dialogue as a structuring component of the European social model and to strengthen it at European, national, regional, sectorial and company level, with particular emphasis on ensuring an enabling framework for collective bargaining within the various models in Member States.

1. Finally, promoting **gender equality** and **youth empowerment** will be mainstreamed into all the activities of the Observatory, which will seek synergies with the EESC's Ad Hoc Group on Equality and the Ad hoc Group on Youth Engagement (EESC Youth Group). In particular, the LMO will advocate to involve young people in its work and in the EU decision-making process, in a structured and meaningful way. The Labour Market Observatory will implement the Manifesto put forward by EESC President Oliver Röpke and the ensuing EESC Bureau decisions, as well as the EESC's opinions on youth[[10]](#footnote-10). To start with, the LMO will **map youth organisations** active in its field and organise **meetings** with them. The Observatory will provide a **standing invitation to youth representatives** to participate in its work[[11]](#footnote-11). It will implement the **participatory mechanism** that will be put in place at the Committee to ensure that young people have the possibility to contribute to the Committee's work and that there is space for dialogue between EESC members and external youth organisations[[12]](#footnote-12).
2. **Working methods in the 2023-2025 LMO term of office**

The Observatory president, its vice-presidents and all members, as well as the secretariat have different but crucial roles to play in co-designing and co-creating its activities.

The following LMO activities are planned for 2023-2025:

1. **Types of activities**
2. **Internal meetings and public events**

The Observatory is entitled to hold up to **three meetings a year** without specific authorisation by the Bureau, with any additional meetings requiring authorisation by the Bureau and the CAF (Commission for Financial and Budgetary Affairs)[[13]](#footnote-13). The meetings can take the form of public events.

The topics of events will be chosen in due time, considering, among other things, European Commission initiatives, activities of EU institutions, priorities of EU presidencies, and proposals from civil society organisations and EESC members, especially if an event is organised in their country.

The events should create an opportunity for various stakeholders to meet and exchange views on key European policies related to the labour market and skills and understand the EESC's positions on the topics discussed. These events will underline the EESC's key role as a representative of European organised civil society.

They will be organised as much as possible in **cooperation** with the European institutions, EU agencies, international organisations, EU-level civil society organisations and the EESC's sections, CCMI, observatories, the EESC's Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks and other EESC bodies.

It is intended that at least three of the public events (LMO meetings) in the term of office will be held **in EU Member States**, if it is possible to organise them in close partnership with national organisations or institutions (such as national Economic and Social Councils, civil society organisations or public institutions) and in cooperation with EESC members from the host country.

1. **Fact-finding missions / Working visits**

To encourage exchanges of information, experience and good practices with civil society organisations, national authorities or economic and social councils of Member States, as well as with EU agencies, the LMO can organise fact-finding missions or working visits, subject to the prior authorisation of the Bureau and of the CAF.

1. **A study from the perspective of social partners and civil society organisations**

The LMO can carry out a study to illustrate the views of the social partners and organised civil society organisations on policies and implementation instruments related to a given topic, and assess the level of involvement of the social partners and civil society organisations in these policies and their initiatives.

This study will provide an opportunity for mutual learning and better understanding of national policies, good practices and challenges. It will give national social partners and other civil society organisations an opportunity to make comments and recommendations that will be discussed in the EESC and, upon decision of the EESC assembly, put forward to the European institutions.

The study will be conducted by way of:

* a *questionnaire* that will be sent to the main social partners and civil society organisations of a selection of countries;
* *interviews on the ground* with representatives of the main umbrella trade unions and employers' organisations, other CSOs, public authorities, and national economic and social councils where relevant – during fact-finding missions carried out in a selection of six Member States. These missions will be carried out by teams of three LMO / SOC members assisted by an administrator from the secretariat;
* *desk research* – collection of relevant documents from European and international institutions, agencies, think-tanks, ministries, national ESCs, social partners, civil society, etc.;
* a *kick-off and/or concluding conference* at the EESC.

The selection of Member States for the study will be made based on their specific situation as regards the topic, the aim of ensuring a range of situations (good practices, challenges, division of competences at national level, etc.) and geographical balance, on the information available and on discussions with representatives from the EESC, Commission and permanent representations to the EU.

1. **Information documents**

Pursuant to Rule of Procedure 27.5[[14]](#footnote-14), the Observatory can draw up information documents, which may be forwarded to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission or to any other European Union institution or body, if the assembly so decides.

1. **Cooperation and synergies**

Cooperation with EESC structures and external organisations is key for the LMO, in order to take an overarching approach and consider all policies' impact on the labour market and the situation of all groups of people, leaving no one behind. This cooperation allows the observatory to integrate the perspectives of other bodies and organisations, to promote interdisciplinary dialogue, strengthen the effectiveness and impact of the LMO and to promote the EESC's work more widely.

The Labour Market Observatory will seek synergies with **other EESC working structures** and avoid overlap with their work. In particular, the LMO will cooperate with the **permanent groups of the SOC section** as regards the situation of migrants and asylum seekers, Roma and persons with disabilities. It will also cooperate with **the Observatory of the Digital Transition and the Single Market (DSMO)** and **the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO)**, with which it will jointly organise at least one common event during this term of office. Furthermore, meetings will be organised between the respective presidents of the three observatories to better coordinate work, and the Labour Market Observatory will invite members of the other observatories to the LMO's meetings and events. The LMO will also work closely with the **EESC's communication directorate**, to ensure appropriate communication on the LMO's activities and contribute to the follow-up to the EESC's opinions.

The LMO will also continue its good cooperation with **the European institutions** and the specialised **EU agencies**, such as the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), the European Agency for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Labour Authority (ELA). The Observatory will also try to organise at least three working visits to EU agencies during this term of office.

The Labour Market Observatory will endeavour to enhance its cooperation with international organisations such as the International Labour Organization (**ILO**) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) and relaunch its contacts with the European Network on Regional Labour Market Monitoring (**EN RLMM**).

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – List of LMO members and members of the Coordination Group on the European Year of Skills

Appendix 2 – Planned activities of the Coordination Group of the European Year of Skills

**Appendix 1**

**Presidency and Members 2023 - 2025**

**Labour Market Observatory and Coordination Group of the European Year of Skills**

| **LMO PRESIDENCY** |
| --- |
|  | **GR I** | **GR II** | **GR III** |
|  | [**Pilawski, Lech**](https://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/members/2030280) (PL)**LMO** **Vice-President** | [**Trindade, Carlos Manuel**](https://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/members/2026933) (PT)**LMO President** | **[Joó, Kinga](https://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/members/2026956)** (HU)**LMO Vice-President** |
| **LMO MEMBERS** |
| **MS** | **GR I** | **GR II** | **GR III** |
| AT | [**Schweng, Christa**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Detail.aspx?id=2001276&f=5&s=0&o1=0&o2=0&o3=0&bur=2015670) | [**Reisecker, Sophia**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Detail.aspx?id=2014440&f=5&s=0&o1=0&o2=0&o3=0&bur=2015670) | **Schaffenrath, Martin** |
| BE | [**Soete, Paul**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Search/Details/Person/2034101?onlyActiveMandate=True&isMinimal=False) | [**Wyckmans, Ferre**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Detail.aspx?id=2014440&f=5&s=0&o1=0&o2=0&o3=0&bur=2015670) |  |
| BG |  |  | [**Dulevski, Lalko**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Detail.aspx?id=2026892&f=5&s=0&o1=0&o2=0&o3=0&bur=2015670) |
| CY | [**Antoniou, Michalis**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Detail.aspx?id=2016193&f=5&s=0&o1=0&o2=0&o3=0&bur=2015670) |  |  |
| DE |  | **Bartels, Holger** |  |
| ES |  | **Barrera Chamorro, Maria del Carmen** |  |
| FR | [**GONDARD-Argenti, Marie-Françoise**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Search/Details/Person/2032973?onlyActiveMandate=True&isMinimal=False) |  |  |
| HR |  | **Milićević-Pezelj, Anica** |  |
| HU | **Vadász, Borbála** |  |  |
| IE |  |  | **McLoughlin, Michael** |
| IT |  | **Merlo, Nicoletta** | **Marcantonio, Giovanni** |
| PL |  | [**Gardias, Dorota**](http://memberspage.eesc.europa.eu/Detail.aspx?id=2026929&f=5&s=0&o1=0&o2=0&o3=0&bur=2015670) | **Ochędzan, Justyna Kalina** |
| RO | **Preda, Bogdan** |  |  |
| SE | **Ardhe, Christian** |  | **Andersson, Jan Torsten** |
| SI |  |  | **Repanšek, Neža** |

| **Sub-group on the European Year of Skills** |
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**President: McLoughlin, Michael** (Gr 3, IE, LMO member)

**Rapporteur** of the EESC's [opinion](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-year-skills-2023) on the European Year of Skills 2023: **Babrauskienė, Tatjana** (Gr 2, LT, non-LMO member, member of SOC, NAT, REX)

The Sub-group on the European Year of Skills is formed of:

* 6 LMO members (see info above): Gr 1: **PILAWSKI, Lech**; **VADÁSZ, Borbála**;
Gr 2: **BARRERA CHAMORRO, Maria del Carmen**; **MERLO, Nicoletta**;
Gr 3: **JOÓ, Kinga**; **MCLOUGHLIN, Michael** (president)
* 3 non-LMO members: Gr 1: **CHOIX, Bruno** (FR - INT, TEN, CCMI);
Gr 2: **BABRAUSKIENĖ, Tatjana** (LT - SOC, NAT, REX);
Gr 3: **SINKEVIČIŪTĖ, Elena** (LT - SOC, REX, TEN, EESC Bureau)

**Appendix 2**

**Planned activities of the Coordination group on
the European Year of Skills**

**The EESC Coordination Group on the European Year of Skills 2023:**

* will provide **information, comments and suggestions on how to improve skills policies**, requesting an own-initiative opinion (by June 2024). The aim is to:
* *ensure better cooperation between all policy and decision-makers and all relevant stakeholders, including European institutions and agencies, national governments, the social partners, the civil society organisations and networks, public employment services, education and training providers and companies;*
* *enhance the EESC's role in raising awareness of the importance of skills development, for individuals, companies and society, and the need to embrace a culture of lifelong learning to increase not only companies' and states' willingness to invest in adult learning but also citizens' willingness to enrol in training;*
* *promote skills development as a tool to support social inclusion. Through adult learning, individuals who did not succeed in initial education, or who are returning to the labour market after years of absence due to care responsibilities, can be given a second chance. Skilled citizens enjoy not only better job opportunities but also broader possibilities to engage fully in society, being active citizens;*
* *support particular target groups, such as young people not in employment or education or training (NEETs) and migrants (for instance, to facilitate the recognition of qualifications). Particular attention should also be paid to those at risk of poverty or social exclusion* – *for example, through initiatives to develop their basic digital skills, in light of the 2030 EU target that 80% of EU citizens should cross this threshold (little over half do now);*
* *address the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Only 19% of specialists in information and communication technologies (ICT) and about one third of graduates in STEM are women. New initiatives are needed to tackle this under-representation of women in STEM-related professions. If the EU is to reach another 2030 goal, that 20 million ICT specialists be employed (as opposed to just 7.8 million in 2019), increasing women's representation will be key.*
* **will follow up the EESC opinion on *the European Year of Skills 2023*** ([SOC/749](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-year-skills-2023)), promoting the idea to finally implement **a skills guarantee** offering the right to access quality and inclusive training for all, and to promote engagement in collective bargaining and capacity building to lay down the provisions and conditions for paid educational leave, allowing people to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in society and in labour markets.
* will make concrete proposals for, and will monitor, **EU level and national meetings and events**, where EESC members can be actively involved;
* will **encourage the EESC's sections and the CCMI** to organise debates in the context of the European Year of Skills, in their specific areas of work;
* will continue, and if possible, enhance, the **cooperation with Cedefop**, and will contribute to the joint policy learning forum on upskilling pathways aimed at supporting low skilled and low-qualified adults to upskill and integrate into the labour market;
* will ask the European Commission to invite the EESC to the **EYS23 coordinators' meetings** to exchange views and ensure better cooperation at national level;
* will **support the EESC president in his activities** related to the European Year of Skills and in organising a public event on skills;
* will use all available **communication** tools to raise the profile of the EESC's activities in the area of skills;
* will request that an **Information Report** be drawn up (finalised in June 2024) on the EESC's involvement in the European Year of Skills (activities and outcomes, positive and negative experiences, cooperation and etc.) in order to improve the future coordination of the EU thematic years.

**Skills policy is not an old policy from the past but, especially due to the green and digital transition, is a dynamic policy that will determine the future of Europe.**

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1. Decision of the EESC Bureau of 10 July 2007, R/CESE 921/2007 rev. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Footnote to be added once the SOC priorities are published. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See *Stand up for democracy/speak up for Europe* - EESC PRESIDENT OLIVER RÖPKE – 2023/2025 [Manifesto](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/about/political-organisation/eesc-president/priorities/manifesto). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/platform-work-eu/>. The importance of digital platforms, with some 500 now operating in the EU, has grown in recent years, becoming an engine for innovation and employment growth. More than 28 million people currently work on platforms and this number is expected to rise to 43 million in 2025. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/meetings/epsco/2023/06/12-13/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=10299&furtherNews=yes#navItem-1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9650-2023-INIT/en/pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. EESC opinion [SOC/746](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/democracy-work) on *Democracy at work,* adopted in April 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [The Porto Social Commitment](https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/porto-social-summit/porto-social-commitment), signed at the Porto Social Summit on 7 May 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. EESC resolution [*The long-lasting legacy of the European Year of Youth: youth mainstreaming and empowerment*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/civil-society-citizens-participation/youth-engagement-eesc/documents); EESC opinion [*The EU Youth Test*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-youth-test); EESC opinion [*Towards structured youth engagement on climate and sustainability in the EU decision-making process*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/towards-structured-youth-engagement-climate-and-sustainability-eu-decision-making-process-own-initiative-opinion); EESC study [*Structured youth engagement in the aftermath of the European Year of Youth 2022: mapping local, national, EU and international good practices* (ongoing)](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/work-with-us/public-procurement/low-and-middle-value-contracts/study-structured-youth-engagement-aftermath-european-year-youth-2022-mapping-local-national-eu-and-international-good). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. EESC Bureau decision of 13 June 2023, on *Youth engagement at the EESC – Follow-up to the President's manifesto*, the resolution *The long-lasting legacy of the European Year of Youth* and the opinion *The EU Youth Test*. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. EESC Bureau decision of 13 June 2023, on *Youth engagement at the EESC – Follow-up to the President's manifesto*, the resolution The long-lasting legacy of the European Year of Youth and the opinion The EU Youth Test. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Decision of the EESC Bureau of 18 April 2018, EESC-2018-01200-00-02-PV-TRA. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See Rule of Procedure 27 and the Implementing Provisions <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/about/rules-procedure-and-code-conduct-members-eesc>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)