



LABOUR MARKET OBSERVATORY (LMO)

# Report on the activities of the 2015-2018 term of office



*European Economic and Social Committee*



## **European Economic and Social Committee**

*Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)*  
*Labour Market Observatory (LMO)*

### **Report on the activities carried out by the Labour Market Observatory (LMO) during the term of office September 2015 – April 2018**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Labour Market Observatory (LMO) was set up in 2007<sup>1</sup> with a **mandate** to "identify and analyse labour market trends and challenges, bringing added value to the work of the SOC Section and the Committee". In line with its founding decision, the Observatory meets up to five times a year and carries out the following activities:

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

The LMO is composed of **33 members** (see Annex II of this document), including a president and two vice-presidents, rotating every two and a half years between the three groups. The current president is Mr Carlos Manuel TRINDADE (Portugal, Workers' Group). The vice-presidents are Mrs Vladimíra DRBALOVA (Czech Republic, Employers' Group) and Mr Krzysztof PATER (Poland, Various Interests' Group). All but two LMO members are also part of the SOC Section.

#### **II. PRIORITIES OF THE 2015 – 2018 TERM OF OFFICE**

Taking account of the overarching priorities of the SOC section, which provide the framework for the operational activities of the LMO, and in the light of the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's priorities, the Observatory decided to focus on four main themes between September 2015 and April 2018:

1. The new EU policy on legal migration and the integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market;
2. The impact on employment of the digital transition and the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy and the new opportunities that these transitions bring;
3. The integration of young people and the long-term unemployed into the labour market;
4. Labour mobility within the European Union.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision of the EESC Bureau of 10 July 2007, R/CESE 921/2007 rev.

### III. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE 2015 – 2018 TERM OF OFFICE

The LMO has carried out activities in all the areas set out in its 2015-2018 Work programme. In line with its working methods, LMO's activities consisted mainly of public events, internal meetings and a project to assess the implementation of a Council Recommendation on the long-term unemployed in six EU Member States. Due to its large size and the limited number of meetings per year (5), the LMO has not prepared any opinion in recent years, although it did so in its earlier years.

The Observatory began its term of office with an internal meeting in which the European Commission (DG HOME on migration and integration, DG EMPL on employment and DG Eurostat) participated. At that meeting, it discussed and agreed upon a work programme and working methods.

Between September 2015 and April 2018, the LMO organised **five internal meetings** in Brussels and held **ten public events** (nine in Brussels and one abroad). It also carried out a study which involved meetings in six Member States. The titles and dates of the activities are listed below, but more details on each event can be found in Annex I.

#### **Under LMO's priority 1 - The new EU policy on legal migration and the integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market**

- Joint LMO–IMI–European Commission (DG HOME): "Towards a revised Blue Card Directive: Results of the public consultation", 3 December 2015
- LMO Public seminar "Integrating refugees into the labour market: turning the crisis into an opportunity", 22 February 2016, in cooperation with Eurofound
- LMO Meeting on the topic of legal migration, 18 April 2016
- Joint LMO–European Commission conference "Lessons from the integration of refugees for future labour market and social policies", 6 November 2017
- Cooperation with Eurofound on its project "Approaches to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers": LMO Fact-finding missions to Finland and Denmark, 28 October 2016 and 30 January 2017

#### **Under LMO's priority 2 – The impact on employment of the digital transition and the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy and the new opportunities that these transitions bring**

- LMO Meeting on the "Digitalisation of the economy and its impact on labour markets", 8 November 2016
- LMO Meeting on "The transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy: new opportunities and effect on the labour market", followed by a joint meeting with the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) on "A just transition to a low carbon and circular economy", 8 December 2016
- LMO Conference "On the road to a greener future: acting on employment and skills", 22 June 2017

### **Under LMO's priority 3 – The integration of young people and the long-term unemployed into the labour market**

- LMO Conference on "Tackling long-term unemployment in the EU", 28 February 2017
- LMO meeting, 21 March 2017
- Joint LMO–European Commission (DG EMPL) Conference "Review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe: Intergenerational Fairness and Solidarity", 10 October 2017
- LMO Conference on the "Integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market: the situation 2 years after the Council Recommendation", 12 April 2018
- LMO "Study on the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market in a selection of six Member States: a civil society perspective"

### **Under LMO's priority 4 – Labour mobility within the European Union**

- LMO Conference on "Towards a fairer labour mobility within the EU", 28 September 2016

### **Additional work**

In addition to the work set out at the beginning of its term of office, the LMO worked with the EU agency CEDEFOP on topics related to work-based learning and organised the following:

- A Joint EESC–Cedefop "Policy Learning Forum on Upskilling pathways: a vision for the future", 7-8 February 2018
- A Joint LMO–Cedefop "Education and Training - Employment Encounter", 23 March 2018 in Lisbon

## **IV. COOPERATION WITHIN THE EESC AND WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS**

**Internally**, the Observatory cooperated with **EESC rapporteurs and other members, promoting EESC opinions and other work and providing them with concrete input**. More precisely, it cooperated with the following:

- The other bodies of the SOC section (IMI, PSG Roma, PSG Disability rights) – organisation of joint events, input to fact-finding missions or studies, participation of presidents in meetings;
- EESC sections (INT, NAT, TEN) and CCMI – promotion of their opinions at LMO events;
- EESC Observatories (SDO, SMO) – joint study with SMO on the Services directive, joint event with SDO, participation of presidents in meetings;
- EESC Communication department – participation in the Civil Society Prize 2017. This prize recognised outstanding projects which help the integration into the labour market of people in need, such as people from migrant backgrounds, people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed, women detached from the labour market, young people, and people living in poverty;



- EESC unit "Relations with Organised Civil Society and Forward Studies" – cooperation on several events organised in partnership with civil society organisations.

The LMO continued its **cooperation with institutional and other external partners**, such as the European Parliament, the European Commission (joint events with DG EMPL and DG HOME), cooperation with EU agencies Eurofound and Cedefop on concrete projects, ILO, OECD, national ESCs, civil society organisations and major think-tanks.

## V. COMMUNICATION

The Observatory's role, its composition and work are presented on the **EESC's web pages**.

In addition, within the EESC, **the SOC/LMO newsletter** allows members to follow the work of the LMO.

The LMO cooperated with **the EESC's communication department** for the Civil Society Prize 2017 and for many events (press invitations, press releases, professional photographers, videos, etc.). Regarding **social media**, the LMO opened a twitter account, which is now used systematically.

## VI. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

In a context where high employment remains the number one priority for all EU institutions, it is key for the EESC to **monitor the profound transformations** that are taking place in Member States' labour markets due to, for example, digitalisation and greening and the effects that these are having on the structures, mechanisms and industrial relations of the labour market(s).

In the field of employment, responsibility for policies lies primarily with Member States, while the European Commission mainly assists their efforts, supporting them with EU funds and stimulating peer learning. There are few referrals in this field and the SOC section can work only on a limited number of own-initiative opinions and exploratory opinions. Thus, LMO's activities help to **address a gap** in this very important field.

Against this background, the LMO has a **monitoring and prospective function** by means of which it provides a **forum for debate at EU-level** for social partners and other civil society organisations, it increases the **EESC's visibility** both at EU and national level, it **promotes EESC opinions** and it gives **timely input internally and to the EU institutions**.

When **reflecting on its future working methods**, the LMO could further develop its contribution and input to the SOC Section, as well as continue its cooperation with the internal structures of the EESC and EU institutions/external organisations. It could keep on focusing on specific topics, including more intensive work by smaller groups of members within the Observatory in order to produce tangible results, such as information reports on selected issues.

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### ANNEXES

- Annex I – Description of activities; Annex II – List of the LMO members;
- Annex III – LMO Work Programme

## ANNEX I

### Description of activities

#### Under LMO's priority 1 – The new EU policy on legal migration and the integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market

- **Workshop jointly organised with DG Migration and Home Affairs (HOME) and EESC's Permanent Study Group on Immigration and Integration (IMI): Towards a revised Blue Card Directive: Results of the public consultation, 3 December 2015**

The topic of the event was the 2009 EU Blue Card Directive on the admission and mobility of highly qualified migrants. This event was organised so as to provide the European Commission with timely input, when it was working on the revision of the Directive. LMO members' discussion was based on the evaluation of the Blue Card's implementation, following which they made recommendations on how to deal with issues that hamper the effectiveness of the Blue Card and the attractiveness of the EU in the global competitive search for highly skilled workers.

- **LMO Public seminar "Integrating refugees into the labour market: turning the crisis into an opportunity", 22 February 2016, in cooperation with Eurofound**

The event was conceived as an integral part of a coherent set of EESC activities on the issue of refugees and integration. It was an occasion to discuss factors which influence better and faster labour market integration, to present to a wide audience the opinion SOC/525 on A European Agenda on Migration (adopted in December 2015) and to contribute to the SOC/532 opinion on Integration of refugees in the EU and the European Migration Forum, held on 6–7 April 2016.

This seminar also marked the beginning of Eurofound's project on the integration of Refugees into the labour market, to which the LMO offered its own contribution.

The public seminar featured experts, MEPs, EESC members and several representatives of civil society organisations, who showcased a series of good practices followed at grassroots level. It attracted a very large number of participants and some interest from several journalists who came from a number of Member States to attend the event.

- **LMO Meeting on the topic of legal migration, 18 April 2016**

The aim of this meeting was to discuss the Commission's and the EESC's work on a comprehensive labour migration policy and in particular the outcomes of the European Migration Forum, held on 6–7 April 2016. It contributed to the SOC/539 opinion "Towards a coherent EU labour migration policy".

- **Joint LMO–European Commission conference "Lessons from the integration of refugees for future labour market and social policies", 6 November 2017**

This joint LMO–European Commission conference discussed 1) the lessons learned from all the recent efforts made with respect to the labour market and social integration of refugees; 2) how these developments could be used to address other challenges across EU societies and labour markets, notably to give more opportunities to other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

Participatory in nature, the event included parallel workshops and featured MEPs, the director-general of DG EMPL, representatives from DG Home, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Bank, Eurofound, the European Network of Public Employment Services, national ministries, regional authorities, think tanks and civil society representatives.

➤ **Cooperation with Eurofound on their project "Approaches to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers"**

The LMO carried out two fact-finding missions in Finland and Denmark on 28 October 2016 and 30 January 2017. The aim was to collect good practices from social partners and other civil society organisations in those countries, which were then presented at an event organised by Eurofound on 27 March 2017 in Brussels.

**Under LMO's priority 2 – The impact on employment of the digital transition and the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy and the new opportunities that these transitions bring**

➤ **LMO Meeting on the "Digitalisation of the economy and its impact on labour markets", 8 November 2016**

Participants in the meeting discussed the implications of the digital revolution on the organisation of work, skills needs, employment and working conditions and reflected on the ways the EESC's work can be deepened and supplemented in future. The meeting contributed to future EESC work and launched a more systematic cooperation with the think tank Confrontations Europe, in conjunction with which several partnership events were held afterwards.

It was possible for participants to engage with representatives of the European Commission's DG EMPL, DG CNECT and DG GROW, with Confrontations Europe and EU-level social partners. The relevant EESC rapporteurs presented the SOC/533 opinion on "New forms of work", the CCMI/136 opinion on the "Effects of digitalisation on service industries and employment", the CCMI/141 opinion "Industry 4.0 and digital transformation" and the SOC/546 opinion on a "New skills agenda". The president of the EESC Permanent Study Group "Digital Agenda" (TEN section) and the president of the Single Market Observatory (SMO) contributed to the debates.

➤ **LMO Meeting on "The transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy: new opportunities and effect on the labour market", followed by a joint meeting with the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) on "A just transition to a low carbon and circular economy", 8 December 2016**

These meetings offered members and selected participants a general overview of the effects on employment of the low-carbon transitions and of recent initiatives at EU level, such as the Circular economy and the Green Action plan for SMEs. A study on just transition and tackling climate change in industrial regions was also presented.

The meetings were a good occasion for improved cooperation and exchanges between LMO and SDO members. They had discussions with representatives from the European Commission (DG GROW and DG ENV), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), social partners, civil society and social enterprises. Relevant NAT opinions were presented by their rapporteurs, such as the recent opinion on a Circular

Economy Package and the opinion on the circular economy: job creation and the Green Action Plan for SMEs.

➤ **LMO conference "On the road to a greener future: acting on employment and skills", 22 June 2017**

This event was organised at the request of the European Commission's DG ENV, as a partner event of the "2017 EU Green Week" that had as its theme 'Green jobs for a greener future'. The conference focused on the action needed to create quality jobs, adapt people's skills and help those affected by the changes triggered by the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and greener economy.

Speakers included members of the European Parliament, experts from the European Commission, Cedefop, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), think tanks such as Confrontations Europe, and social partners and civil society representatives.

**Under LMO's priority 3 – The integration of young people and the long-term unemployed into the labour market**

➤ **Conference on "Tackling long-term unemployment in the EU", 28 February 2017**

This event examined developments related to long-term unemployment in the EU since the adoption of a Council Recommendation on the topic in 2016. It also looked at the specific situations of the Roma and of people with disabilities and was a good forum in which to improve synergies with the relevant permanent study groups of the SOC section. The conference was very useful for the preparation of the LMO project which is aimed at assessing the implementation of the Council Recommendation on the long-term unemployed.

The event featured several MEPs, representatives from the Employment Committee of the Council of the EU (EMCO), the Public Employment Services (PES) Network, European Commission, Eurofound, Cedefop as well as social partners and other civil society organisations.

➤ **LMO meeting, 21 March 2017**

The LMO members looked at the employment situation and discussed it with the European Commission and the European Social Observatory (OSE). They also discussed long-term unemployment and youth unemployment and approved the launch of a project in conjunction with Cedefop, on bridging the worlds of Vocational education & training (VET) and the labour market.

➤ **Joint LMO–DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion conference "Review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe: Intergenerational Fairness and Solidarity", 10 October 2017**

The LMO and the DG EMPL organised this joint event to discuss labour market-related problems that younger generations are facing today, the need for adequate and sustainable pensions and the role of civil society in ensuring fairer labour markets for all. On that occasion, the 2017 "Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) Review", prepared by the EC, was launched.



Speakers included the EU Commissioner Marianne Thyssen and representatives from the Estonian Presidency, the Employment Committee (EMCO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Eurofound and social partners/civil society organisations.

➤ **LMO Conference on the "Integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market: the situation 2 years after the Council Recommendation", 12 April 2018**

The aim of the event was to look at the current state of play regarding the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market and to present the results of the study carried out by the Observatory in this field.

Speakers included a member of the European Parliament, as well as representatives from the European Commission and social partners.

➤ **LMO "Study on the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market in a selection of six Member States: a civil society perspective"**

Primarily, the aim of the project is 1) to understand the level of involvement of civil society organisations in the policies for tackling long-term unemployment and to highlight their good practices and comments; and 2) to assess – from the point of view of organised civil society – the policies and measures that are in place to help the long-term unemployed find work, their implementation, and their actual impact on long-term unemployment.

The study is being carried out mainly using a questionnaire sent to employers' organisations, trade unions, and various NGOs of the Member States selected for the study and via meetings in six Member States, namely: Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Italy and Sweden.

Results of the study were discussed at the LMO conference on 12 April 2018.

#### **Under LMO's priority 4 – Labour mobility within the European Union**

➤ **LMO Conference titled "Towards a fairer labour mobility within the EU", 28 September 2016**

The event dealt with labour mobility and in particular the "Revision of the Posting of Workers Directive". It was organised at a very opportune moment given that the subject was at the top of the European agenda. The conference was an occasion to promote the EESC's work, such as the recent SOC/531 opinion on fairer labour mobility and, at the same time, to contribute to the SOC/539 opinion on the Revision of Posting of Workers Directive. The event was very well attended. Speakers and participants represented all interests with a geographically balanced attendance from across the EU and included the MEP who had been the rapporteur of the EP on the topic, the European Commission, Eurofound, social partners, think tanks as well as the relevant rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs of the EESC.

#### **Additional work**

In addition to the work set out at the beginning of its term of office, the LMO cooperated with the EU agency CEDEFOP on topics related to work-based learning:

- **Joint EESC – Cedefop "Policy Learning Forum on Upskilling Pathways: a Vision for the Future", 7-8 February 2018** (linked to LMO's priority on tackling youth and long-term unemployment)

This forum brought together stakeholders and public authorities from all over Europe to discuss and help each other to improve literacy, numeracy and digital competences among adults with a low level of skills through work-based learning. The event was very timely given that the Member States have to implement the 2016 Council recommendation 'Upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults'. Speakers included the relevant rapporteurs of the EESC, experts from Cedefop, representatives from the European Commission, UNESCO, national ministries, regional authorities, and social partners / civil society organisations.

- **Joint LMO–Cedefop "Education and Training - Employment Encounter", 23 March 2018 in Lisbon** (linked to LMO's priorities on tackling youth unemployment and digitalisation)

This "Encounter" allowed contacts between the EESC and Portuguese policymakers, civil society organisations and VET providers to be strengthened. It encouraged dialogue between, on the one side, the education and training actors and, on the other side, the Portuguese labour market stakeholders. Participants discussed ways to improve the skills of young people and workers and to avoid skills mismatches in the context of digitalisation and robotisation.

Speakers and participants included Portugal's Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, the President of the Economic and Social Council of Portugal, several training centres and professional schools, all social partners and students' organisations.

The conclusions arising out of the discussions were prepared together with Cedefop and shared with the Minister of Labour and all the social partners and training centers involved. The aim is that these conclusions should allow all relevant parties to give firm commitments.

Two additional such encounters in the Member States are planned for 2018.

**ANNEX II**  
**List of Labour Market Observatory members**

<b>MS</b>	<b>GR I</b>	<b>GR II</b>	<b>GR III</b>
AT	Schweng, Christa	Greif, Wolfgang	Gajdosik, Alfred
BE		Demelenne, Anne	
BG		Kokalov, Ivan	Dulevski, Lalko
CY	Antoniou, Michalis		
CZ	<b>Drbalová, Vladimíra</b> <b>Vice-President</b>		
DE			Heinisch, Renate Moos, Christian
DK	Andersen, Dorthe	Fallenkamp, Bernt	Kindberg, Mette
ES	Cirez Miqueleiz, Patricia	Moreno Diaz, José Antonio	
FI	Ahtela, Antti-Jukka		
FR		Meynent, Denis	
HU	Vadász, Borbala		Joó, Kinga
IE			McLoughlin, Michael
IT	Durante, Giancarlo	Del Rio, Cinzia	Calderone, Marina Elvira
LV			Anča, Gunta
PL	Klimek, Jan	Gardias, Dorota	<b>Pater, Krzysztof</b> <b>Vice-President</b>
PT		<b>Trindade, Carlos Manuel</b> <b>President</b>	Matias Ramos, Carlos
RO	Floria, Irinel Eduard	Luca, Liviu	
SE	Ekenger, Karin		
UK		McKnight, Judy	



**European Economic and Social Committee**

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

**Work programme 2015-2018**

**Introduction**

The Labour Market Observatory (LMO) was set up in 2007 with a mandate to identify and analyse labour market trends and challenges, bringing added value to the work of the SOC section and the EESC. Composed of 33 members, including a president and two vice-presidents, it operates within and reports to the SOC section and, as a general rule, deals with complex issues requiring longer and more in-depth consideration than is possible using a normal study-group working method<sup>2</sup>.

Against this background and taking account of the overarching priorities of the SOC section, which provide the framework for the operational activities of the LMO and in the light of the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's priorities, it is proposed that the Observatory focus on four main themes during the first half-term of its upcoming mandate.

**5. The new EU policy on legal migration and integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market**

Migration flows, both of economic migrants and asylum-seekers, have made the news headlines on a daily basis this year. EU countries are struggling to find a way to deal with the large influx of people from abroad and the EU is under pressure to find immediate and sustainable solutions to these issues.

The EESC is putting migration and asylum high on its list of priorities and, based on its extensive expertise in this field, is calling for a holistic, long-term approach to realise the full economic potential of immigrants and of citizens with an immigrant background and to ensure their full participation in society.

In dealing with these topics, the LMO should work in full collaboration with the permanent study group on immigration and integration (IMI) and cooperate with relevant sections and the CCMI where needed (e.g. with REX on the issue of cooperation with countries of origin on pre-departure measures, such as language learning and acquiring skills that are needed in the EU, with INT on entrepreneurship, SMEs and social economy, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup>

Decision of the EESC Bureau of 10 July 2007, R/CESE 921/2007 rev.

Possible activities:

- *public events concerning the EU Blue Card scheme and refugees' and migrants' integration into the labour market (together with the IMI and the Commission);*
- *evaluations of the revision and implementation of EU migration and integration policies in the Member States in a new geopolitical context, as seen by organised civil society;*
- *disseminating information about the advantages of a well-managed labour migration and integration (including fact-based information and migrants testimonies) – at EU or national level;*

**6. The impact on employment of the digital transition and the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy and the new opportunities that these transitions bring**

The digital revolution is having a considerable impact on the labour market, the structure of employment and the type of skills needed in the economy and society. Uber and other digital platforms are redefining the interaction between consumers, workers, and employers and the full implications of the digitalisation process have yet to become clear. Some experts believe that "middle-class" jobs will be threatened as a result of technological change and that this will lead to vast increases in income inequality, masses of people who are effectively unemployable and a breakdown of social order. Others see new opportunities and expect technology not to displace more jobs than those it creates by 2025. However, promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and quality work for all is one of the sustainable development goals adopted by the UN summit held on 25-27 September 2015.

Environmental constraints, climate change and the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy will have a far-reaching impact on production and consumption patterns and on enterprises and workers. Research shows that proactive policies to protect the climate and preserve the environment can actually create substantially more jobs than "business as usual" growth. There are also challenges linked to the transition to a greener economy from a work perspective, notably with respect to restructuring, employment losses and relocation of workers, and changing the tasks and skill profiles of many jobs.

The LMO will work on these topics, drawing on past EESC action and in collaboration with the Single Market Observatory (INT), the TEN section, the NAT section and its Sustainable Development Observatory as well as the CCMI.

The aim will be to further raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in these two fields and to propose sustainable solutions that would minimise any adverse effects and take full advantage of any opportunities.

Possible activities:

- *conference on the impact on employment and skills development of the digital transition and the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy, if possible in cooperation with INT/SMO, TEN and NAT/SDO;*

- *contribution to a SOC exploratory or own-initiative opinion on new forms of work and their link to a living wage, containing policy recommendations as to how to regulate and mitigate the negative effects of new forms of employment relationships.*

## **7. Integration into the labour market of young people and the long-term unemployed**

The crisis has steadily affected two specific segments of the labour market: young people and workers aged between 45 and 60 years, who are at a higher risk of becoming unemployed long-term. Given the particularities of each of these categories, specific objectives and strategies are needed for them.

Despite some slow improvement, the youth unemployment rate is still very high, ranging from above 50% in some countries to 10% in others.

In 2014, 49.5% of the total number of unemployed individuals consisted of people who had been unemployed for 12 months or more. The long-term unemployed, whatever educational training or professional qualification they may hold, face enormous barriers to their reintegration into the labour market. This affects not only the labour market, which loses experience and know-how built up over many years, but also has direct consequences on social life, because of its direct link to the structure of families and society.

Good quality initial and continuous education and training, successful labour market integration, supporting entrepreneurial spirit, start-ups, entrepreneurship and greater mobility are key to unleashing young people's and older workers' potential. Particular focus should be placed on the role of public employment services, promoting the Youth Guarantee scheme and Long-term Unemployment scheme to ensure that all young people and the long-term unemployed benefit from tailor-made activation strategies.

Drawing on recent work by the SOC section, the LMO and the CCMI, the LMO will look at selected aspects linked to youth unemployment, long-term unemployment, job quality, and the integration of those people who are furthest away from the labour market. Youth unemployment and long-term unemployment can be looked at in a transversal way or can be dealt with separately. Regarding inclusion of people with disabilities and the Roma, the LMO could cooperate with the permanent study groups on the inclusion of the Roma and on disability rights.

### Possible activities:

- *evaluation of the implementation of the Council recommendation on long-term unemployment to assess whether it leads to more effective support being given to the long-term unemployed regarding quick transition to employment;*
- *evaluation of the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative to assess whether this initiative leads to improvements and whether the EU and its Member States take the right steps to complete administrative planning and procedures, use European and national funds in an efficient way and really reach out to the young;*
- *public event on the integration of young people and the long-term unemployed into the labour market to illustrate notable examples of successful civil society initiatives in these fields;*
- *provide a forum for a civil society debate on youth employment, education and training policies as well as a forum for discussing the progress achieved by individual Member States*



*and successful measures for the inclusion of the long-term unemployed in the labour market.*

#### **4. Labour mobility within the European Union**

Intra-EU labour mobility is today a reality that is undeniable and positive, and safeguarding and promoting this allows for freer movement of workers. In particular, the interactions between EU citizens that take place in the process of labour mobility favour the existence of inter-cultural and inclusive societies in each Member State and contribute to the construction of a universal and cosmopolitan Europe, that benefits from social and economic cohesion.

Making use of existing studies, relevant experiences, good practices and the case-law of the European Court of Justice, the LMO could work on the Labour Mobility Package, study the current situation, and communicate the advantages of a form of intra-EU labour mobility that respects each Member State's existing standards.

##### Possible activities:

- *carrying out a robust study of the current situation, which could contribute to an EESC opinion on labour mobility;*
- *a conference organised in the context of the Labour Mobility Package.*

##### **Working methods**

Based on experience during the preceding mandates, the LMO will adapt its working methods to better meet its objective of providing a platform for in-depth consideration of the three themes set out above.

##### Possible activities:

- *organising internal LMO meetings for the preparation of public events (e.g. conferences, hearings) and follow-up to events (conclusions, declarations, further action); when needed, members from other EESC bodies will be encouraged to present their work and external experts and guests will be invited to present results of analysis and research or recent statistical data on issues related to the labour market;*
- *preparing opinions, when necessary;*
- *turning public events into genuine laboratories for ideas, which could then be presented to the SOC section or other EESC bodies, as appropriate, for concrete follow-up activities (own-initiative/exploratory opinions, evaluations, other events, going local, etc.);*
- *making public events more output-oriented with conclusions and concrete recommendations, declarations, position papers, evaluations, opinions and civil society's best practices databases;*
- *"going local" events, in cooperation with national ESCs/similar bodies, EC and EP representations.*

## Cooperation

By virtue of its area of competence and way of working, the LMO cooperates with the sections, observatories and the CCMI. The LMO will further enhance internal cooperation and step up external cooperation with important partner institutions.

### Possible measures:

- *cooperate via the Liaison Group with civil society organisations and networks and make better use of contacts made by the unit for inter-institutional relations and relations with national ESCs;*
- *improve cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, the OECD, national economic and social councils and the European Network on Regional Labour Market Monitoring;*
- *step up cooperation with CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) and Eurofound (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions).*

## Communication

In order to be useful, the results of the LMO's work need to be made known and disseminated.

### Possible measures:

- *make the LMO's activities (events, internal meetings, evaluations, etc.) more visible in the SOC/LMO newsletter;*
  - *enhance communication through the LMO website by providing more information on labour market issues, recent developments and links to EU institutions (EP Employment Committee, DG Employment, EPSCO, etc.), EU agencies and partner organisations;*
  - *further enhance cooperation with the EESC's communication department with respect to press invitations, press releases, professional photographers, etc.;*
  - *use Twitter on a regular basis, rather than just in the run up to and during conferences;*
  - *improve dissemination of results, e.g. through regular electronic and paper publications.*
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**European Economic and Social Committee**

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