Workers’ Group EESC OPINIONS REVIEW
JANUARY - JULY 2022

ADOPTED OPINIONS with Rapporteurs/Co-rapporteurs from the Workers’ Group
The summaries of the adopted opinions presented here were prepared by the Secretariat with the only intention of communicating their content, highlighting the key issues for the Trade Union environment, European Workers, and other relevant partners.
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Summaries of adopted opinions
January

SOC/640 – EURES – for a better integration of labour markets
Dimitar Manolov

The Workers’ Group encourages initiatives at European and local level that develop a more adaptable and accessible European labour market for all citizens, regardless of nationality, gender, age or social status. The EURES portal, has rapidly become a familiar tool aimed at providing equal access to quality information, counselling and intermediation, efficient and secure systems for the electronic exchange of data between jobseekers and employers. However, the socio-economic changes that have taken place in the EU and EEA over these nearly 27 years call for the improvement of these services and for greater clarity and visibility of the real performance of public employment services. This improvement can be made on the basis of an outline of future paths for the further development of or changes to information, advisory and intermediation activities, support for the reduction of imbalances in the European labour market, and also the addressing of abusive and unregulated practices in the area of employment intermediation. It is also necessary to take account of the fact that, since its creation, EURES has not been subject to any substantial changes to update its roles and activities in a timely manner. In the context of its activities, we believe that the network has the potential to provide more analytical information and carry out monitoring of processes related to labour mobility. Through its electronic portal, the network could provide consolidated information and advice to jobseekers and employers on a much larger scale than at present. With the incorporation of EURES into the activities of the European Labour Authority (ELA), the activities of the network could be expanded and optimised in order to maximise the output of the human and financial resources invested therein.

More info at https://europa.eu/!rBJTpx

SOC/692 – FRRL/Rule of Law and the recovery fund
Christian Bäumler

For the Workers’ Group it is of paramount importance that the recovery programmes presented by the Member States set out the measures they will take to strengthen the rule of law. We call for all programmes supported by the EU budget to be subject to legal requirements on freedom of information and transparency. Furthermore, we call for participation in the European Public Prosecutor’s Office enhanced cooperation to become a prerequisite for participating in programmes financed by the EU budget, while we propose that the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) to be developed into an agency for the rule of law and administrative efficiency. Systematic shortcomings with respect to the rule of law in Member States have a detrimental impact on the EU budget, and
the Workers' Group calls for the burden of proof to be reversed in this respect. The EU must protect NGOs promoting human rights and the rule of law from undue influence and to support their funding.

More info at https://europa.eu/!QWcuFp
SOC/703 – Social dialogue as a tool to foster health and safety at work
Franca Salis-Madinier

The Workers' Group sees social dialogue (SD) as instrumental in achieving the three key objectives: anticipating and managing change in the world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions; improving prevention of workplace accidents and work-related illnesses; and being prepared for any potential future health crises. The pandemic is an opportunity to create a new collective ability to tackle future crises. The recovery plan should make it possible to strengthen the role of the social partners in the Member States where they have the least influence. We call for the remit of labour inspectorates to be extended to include inspection of teleworking conditions, at the employee's request and with due regard to privacy, while we recommend that the cost of work-related illnesses such as heart disease and burnout be thoroughly investigated in order to pinpoint appropriate measures in line with Vision Zero. Finally, the Workers' Group calls for a culture of prevention to be developed; this should involve training the parties involved in the SD, raising awareness of emerging risks and bolstering and disseminating the resources available.

More info at https://europa.eu/!TKFh9q

INT/960 – CO2 performance standards / new cars
Dirk Bergrath

New registrations of cars and in vans in the EU should make it possible to achieve a 100% reduction in EU fleet-wide emissions by 2035. The Workers' Group supports the proposed EU fleet-wide CO2 emission reduction targets for new passenger cars by 55% and generally supports the 50% reduction target for light commercial vehicles as from 2030. Fleet limits provide a very powerful and efficient impetus for technological change in the industry. In line with previous opinion, we note that, despite all of the benefits, the 'tailpipe' approach has to be complemented by other policy instruments. The Fit for 55 Package must ensure a life-cycle approach and avoid road transport electrification leading to a shift of emissions upstream in the value chain. Individual mobility must remain accessible and affordable for all, especially for commuters without access to quality public transport or other mobility solutions.

More info at https://europa.eu/!tx6KBW
INT/961 – Path to the Digital Decade
Philip von Brockdorff

The Workers' Group urges the EU to develop its digital sovereignty, which over the coming years is expected to be a crucial pillar of Europe's path to economic, social and environmental development. We highlight the fact that digital sovereignty must be based on global competitiveness, relying on solid cooperation between Member States, which is a necessary prerequisite for the EU to be a global standard-setter, including in the trustworthiness of technologies. The digital transformation needs to take place in a sustainable, human-centred and inclusive way. To this end, the EESC deems it crucial to guarantee the involvement of civil society representatives, including the social partners, consumers' organisations and other concerned stakeholders, in shaping, implementing and monitoring the policy programme and related national roadmaps. We point out the need for specific attention to be paid to the people that are most vulnerable in terms of exposure to the digital gap, such as older people, persons with low-level qualifications, and persons with disabilities.

More info at https://europa.eu/!dcuYXN

NAT/844 – Food security and sustainable food systems
Peter Schmidt

The EESC has been the first EU institution to call for a comprehensive food policy in the EU, with the aim of nurturing healthy diets from sustainable food systems, linking agriculture to nutrition and ecosystem services, and ensuring supply chains that safeguard public health for all sections of European society. The Workers' Group identifies the following key levers to be used at EU level to safeguard the competitiveness of European producers, with a view to ensuring both European food security and sustainability and affordable prices for consumers:

i. fostering an open strategic autonomy for food security and sustainability;
ii. developing innovative technologies and seeds to always be able to provide solutions to farmers faced with restrictions on existing tools;
iii. ensuring broadband coverage and digitalisation as a precondition for precision farming and robotics, and supporting the investments in such sustainable techniques.

More info at https://europa.eu/!4tPJfX
ECO/565 – Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive (ETD)
Philippe Charry

The Workers’ Group supports the proposal on the Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive, as it updates and seeks to clarify the framework of the 2003 Directive and because it seeks to structure taxation in a way that favours sustainable non-fossil energy. **We regret, however, that the taxation of biofuels under the proposal is too rigidly linked to the categorisation made in the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), and we believe that the scarcity of alternative fuels and the ensuing high cost level call for a more flexible attitude on admissible biofuels, including with regard to the minimum taxation level, which should be much lower than that applicable to fossil fuels.** The increased minimum tax level may have negative social effects, causing energy and mobility poverty, and we are pleased to note that Member States may go below minimum levels for heating fuel and electricity used by vulnerable households and organisations recognised as charitable and that a ten-year total exemption from taxation for heating fuel and electricity used by “vulnerable households” is proposed.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!QDbCYD](https://europa.eu/!QDbCYD)

TEN/752 – NAIADES III
Mateusz Szymański

Inland waterway transport (IWT) still has untapped potential. NAIDES III takes into account the significant problems of developing this mode of transport and, in principle, the Workers’ Group supports the proposed goals and objectives therein. In view of the changes in demand for transport and the upwards trend in seaport turnover, it is necessary to continuously adapt European transport to current and future needs. **The Workers’ Group calls for this to be done on the basis of the principle of multimodality and smart shipping, which implies making the best possible use of the advantages of the various modes of transport to achieve the best possible results, while at the same time increasing safety and reducing the environmental burden.** We believe that it will be easier to achieve the objectives if the two main priorities are set: (1) long-term – development and maintenance of waterway infrastructure, and (2) short-term – development of IWT in cities. The planned changes will not be effective unless there is appropriate infrastructure underpinning the development and maintenance of this mode of transport. Without the prospect of improving navigation conditions on waterways, shipowners will not take the risk and not invest in a modern fleet, and the local authorities of individual countries will not be interested in creating intermodal terminals.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!JfNiq3](https://europa.eu/!JfNiq3)
February

SOC/691 – The impact of COVID-19 on fundamental rights and the rule of law across the EU and the future of democracy
José Antonio Moreno Díaz

The Workers’ Group expresses its deep concern regarding the way COVID-19 is impacting the life, safety, welfare and dignity of all of the people living in the EU. It is also very concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on individuals and communities worldwide, especially in the countries lacking the proper health, social and educational infrastructure to deal with the pandemic. **The response of the EU and the Member States must address the systemic vulnerabilities of Europe’s health infrastructure in the face of increased mobility and increased probability of dangerous zoonotic diseases.** Moreover, efforts to combat the pandemic should go hand in hand with putting in place a proper social and economic support system to alleviate its disruptive effects. While the response to the current crisis needs to be swift and warrants certain exceptional and time-limited measures, **these cannot go against the rule of law and cannot endanger democracy, the separation of powers and the fundamental rights of European inhabitants.** The EU should align its policies, strategies and programmes to pursue a fair and comprehensive recovery from the crisis, with a view to achieving upward convergence in medical, social, economic and democratic standards. **Governments should clearly identify the legal basis for their measures.** Any reform of existing health emergency laws and related rules or introduction of new ones, including in preparation for future pandemics, should set explicit limits and conditions and make explicit provision for the parliamentary scrutiny and judicial review of the proportionality of the measures. Rules and policies related to COVID-19 should be clear, coherent and consistent insofar as is possible, with the provision of information about them in a timely manner.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!G6PnW9](https://europa.eu/!G6PnW9)

SOC/713 – Reinforcing democracy and integrity of elections package
Carlos Manuel Trindade

Enabling and promoting conscious political participation by citizens is critical, as are ensuring transparent, accessible and honest political activities and a clear and active role for civil society. This opinion proposes several amendments to the Regulations and some additional actions in this respect. **The Workers’ Group supports including all aspects linked to political campaigning in the election package.** A stronger focus is needed on countering disinformation, as the latter has an increasing impact on elections and transparency. Fact checking and media literacy cannot address either the barrage of divisive and misleading content that citizens are exposed to, or what attracts some citizens to such content in the first place. The opinion proposes several measure in areas such as i) the transparency and targeting of political advertising, the EESC suggests specific proposals for improvement, ii) the statute and funding of
European political parties and European political foundations, iii) resilience and strengthening the role of civil society in electoral processes.

More info at https://europa.eu/!9RDWCr
NAT/832 – Minimising the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with products placed on the EU market
Florian Marin

The regulation as proposed by the European Commission, should not only cover deforestation and forest degradation. Products and commodities, the production of which has led to the destruction of other high value conservation ecosystems such as savannahs, wetlands, peatlands, mangroves or riparian buffers, should also be covered by a prohibition that prevents them from being placed on the European market. **Important forest risk commodities such as maize, sugar and rubber should be included in the scope of the regulation as of its entry into force.** The regulation must address other very important social and environmental issues associated with the production of the products covered, in addition to deforestation and forest degradation. The efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed legislation depends on the priority it is given in Member States and on the operational capacity of competent authorities in each Member State. High priority must be given to making sure that all Member States carry out an efficient and effective control, that the necessary funds are dedicated to the initiative, and that systems are in place in all Member States before the entry into force of the regulation.

More info at [https://europa.eu/tWQxfn8](https://europa.eu/tWQxfn8)

ECO/566 – Solvency II Review
Christophe Lefèvre

The Workers’ Group agrees with the European Commission that the Solvency II rules, which are based on three pillars (quantitative capital requirements; organisational structure, supervision; reporting, transparency), have proved their worth. However, the experience of the sovereign debt crisis, the low interest rate policy, the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is by no means over, and the knowledge that other crises will occur, mean that the regulatory framework should be adapted. **The Workers’ Group strongly welcomes the fact that the European Commission is addressing the issue of systemic risks in the insurance sector.** The risk profile of insurers is changing. In view of the climate crisis, the insurance sector plays a particularly important role when it comes to insurance against the impact of climate change and new environmental risks. We also support the European Commission’s objective of creating a regulatory framework in which the insurance sector plays an even greater role as an investor in financing the transition to a sustainable economy and in tackling the impact of COVID-19 and climate change.

ECO/569 – Annual Sustainable Growth Survey 2022
Judith Vorbach

The EU faced adverse developments and crises long before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the EU entered the deepest economic recession in its history, while existing challenges were still far from being solved. Unprecedented supportive actions were taken by the EU to soften the blow and stave off an unstable situation. However, the pandemic can only be tackled transnationally and the Workers' Group calls for a foresightful cooperation on the EU’s health policy, a boost to vaccination levels and the adoption of a global approach, in order to have an open debate at EU level on a temporary and voluntary TRIPS waiver. **We advocate a prosperity-focused policy and support the EU’s "competitive sustainability" agenda. Its four dimensions – environmental sustainability, productivity, fairness and macroeconomic stability – as well as competitiveness, should be placed on an equal footing in order to achieve the intended reinforcing effects and successful transformation.** The weaker the involvement of parliaments, the social partners and other civil society organisations, the more likely it is that disparities will increase and acceptance decrease, especially with regard to the transformation of the economy to achieve climate neutrality.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!XWbxTB](https://europa.eu/!XWbxTB)

TEN/745 – The social challenges of greening maritime and inland waterway transport
Pierre Jean Coulon

In these fields, of inland waterway transport, 'close cooperation with all stakeholders in the maritime cluster and supply chain is necessary to ultimately reach this goal'. The same applies for the necessary 'interest in creating intermodal terminals', allowing for 'the development of inland waterway transport in cities, contributing to a better quality of life'. **The Workers' Group believes that maritime and inland waterway transport greening must take into account the health and quality of life of those living in the vicinity of navigation channels and ports. Consequently, the port authorities, local and regional authorities, and transport stakeholders must work together to rethink the links between cities, ports, and transport stakeholders.** The greening transition can only happen once adequate training aimed at employees has been put in place.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!4yQkTN](https://europa.eu/!4yQkTN)
TEN/757 – New European Bauhaus
Pierre Jean Coulon

The Workers' Group supports the proposal of a New European Bauhaus (NEB) with the aim of "creating beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive places [...] and ways of living" that are accessible and affordable for all, in particular in response to the climate crisis. We also support the recommended holistic and interdisciplinary approach that entails building a greener and fairer future for Europe together. It also supports the promotion of this "new lifestyle" combining "sustainability and style", while accelerating the green transition in several areas of Europeans' daily lives, their regions, places of living, work, mobility and environments. Finally, our Group underlines the importance of the cultural dimension of the New European Bauhaus, "a project of hope and perspectives", and its creative dimension at the heart of the European Green Deal and its building renovation wave, which provides a crucial basis for the green transition. The aim of this cultural movement is to provide all citizens with access to goods that are circular and less carbon-intensive in their places of living, work, public buildings and housing through practical experiences that should be promoted as close to citizens as possible, at the level of the urban and rural areas and neighbourhoods where they live.

More info at https://europa.eu/!YV6Bb7

TEN/761 – Energy prices
Thomas Kattnig

The most intensive impact on the energy price rally comes from the sharp global increase in the demand for gas and was further pushed by the upward economic recovery, tightened supplies to the EU, lack of investment because of austerity policy after the financial market and economic crises and delayed infrastructure maintenance because of the pandemic. The current energy price crisis would not hit European citizens and companies so hard if Europe wasn't so highly dependent on imports of fossil fuels. Certain countries exploit this dependency for geopolitical purposes. As a result, European businesses and consumers suffer. This underlines the need to maximise efforts to increase the share of renewable energy, which could have a price-depressing effect and will certainly increase the EU's energy autonomy. National regulators need to play an active role in addressing consumer concerns of all kinds, and proactively inform consumers of their rights in the current high-price phase. Likewise, when setting tariffs, suppliers must be prompted to ensure that stable tariffs continue to be available to consumers and not only so-called "floater" tariffs, which reflect developments on the exchanges. Those who are affected by price increases should definitely be supported, for example by enabling them to realise energy-saving measures, to participate in the generation and use of renewable energies on their own or in communities, and thus to benefit from lower prices of low and zero-emission energy sources.
March

SOC/705 – Sanctions against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals
Carlos Manuel Trindade

We note the Commission's stance when it states that the Directive grants Member States the flexibility to design different approaches to achieve its objectives, which allow them to take into account national specificities relating to the labour market, the role of illegal employment and migration and the severity of violation. However, all Member States need to ensure that the rules are successful in deterring "irregular" migration and tackling illegal employment. The Workers' Group underlines that the shortcomings of this Directive relate to its actual transposition by the Member States, in particular the considerable variability. Regarding sanctions, which in most cases means they do not do much to dissuade employers from hiring illegally staying third country nationals. They also relate to the Directive's inability to encourage migrants to, as a rule, engage with the authorities due to their legitimate and justified fear of being returned to their country of origin. In fact, the mechanisms for migrants to file complaints are generally ineffective, because there is a lack of permanently available, detailed, effective and meaningful information in the languages of the target group, because inspections are few and far between (due to a lack of staff) or are inefficient, and because Member States do not provide timely, adequate reports or information permitting regular evaluation of the Directive's application.

More info at https://europa.eu/!qqcMQt

SOC/707 – A renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025)
José Antonio Moreno Díaz

Migrant smuggling is a cross-border criminal activity that puts people's lives at risk, violates fundamental rights, and disrupts the orderly management of migration flows. In the last 20 years, human smuggling has grown as a result of multiple factors of expulsion in countries of origin (human rights violations, violence, conflicts, inequalities, economic factors, environmental factors, etc.), but also due to the lack of legal means of accessing the territories of many countries. Restrictions, which have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased the number of people using these illicit networks, with all the risks that this entails. The Workers' Group welcomes the renewed EU action plan and the comprehensive approach it proposes, as the continuation of the European Union's work to combat migrant smuggling. It is understood that, as a criminal activity, smuggling puts the lives of migrants at risk and violates their rights, takes undue advantage of people seeking access to EU territory, and is also a threat to European security. We understand that safeguarding external borders is a priority for the European Union, but points out that they must always be protected with respect for human rights and the inviolability of public international law, always...
protecting people and avoiding the criminalisation of solidarity. In any case, the fight against migrant smuggling can never be directed against the migrants themselves or against humanitarian aid and assistance to them. There is a need to eliminate demand in order to target the profits of human smuggling networks. However, it warns of the dysfunctions that can arise from addressing only the supply side (networks). In this regard, it points out that the existence of legal, effective and safe channels, as well as the protection of the right to asylum, are key to deactivating a large part of this illicit business.

More info at https://europa.eu/!PxhdY3

SOC/709 – Improving working conditions in platform work

Cinzia Del Rio

The pandemic has highlighted some changes in the world of work, which were already underway, and accelerated the expansion of all kinds of platform work, thus reinforcing the growth and impact of the digital economy. The Workers' Group welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Directive on improving working conditions in platform work. This regulatory intervention should aim to set clear definitions of the criteria for classifying employment relations and for governing the use of algorithms, and should provide access to social and labour protections and rights. The platform economy opens up opportunities for both businesses and workers. The biggest concerns related to the platform economy include more limited access to social protection and social security coverage, health and safety risks, insecure work, fragmented working hours and inadequate levels of income and difficulties in ensuring the recognition of collective rights. We deem it necessary to ensure equal treatment between "traditional" companies and those using digital means based on the functions of algorithmic management: direction, control and/or organisational power. Flexibility in working hours is a positive feature of some forms of platform work, welcomed in particular by those relying on platform work as an additional source of income. However, flexibility cannot be to the detriment of fundamental social and labour standards guaranteed by EU law. Legal classification of the employment relationship and its clear distinction from genuine self-employment is key to ensuring legal certainty for both businesses and workers and to ensuring workers' rights and protections. However, this issue is dealt with differently in different Member States.

More info at https://europa.eu/!38PNFJ

SOC/715 – Higher education package

Tatjana Babrauskienė

The Workers' Group underlines the importance of the European Commission's statement regarding the initiative on education package: "Universities need to be places of freedom: for speech, thought, learning, research and academic freedom at large. Academic freedom cannot be isolated from institutional autonomy, nor from the participation of students and staff in higher education governance." We are pleased that the initiative encourages the Member States and HEI to bolster transnational cooperation in
order to improve students' skills and competences for the twin transitions of the labour market and economy, uphold the EU's values, identity and democracy, and make European society and economy more resilient. There is an important role to be played by Higher Education Institutions in improving green skills acquisition, environmental responsibility and sustainable development which should be integrated transversally within the learning outcomes of education.

More info at https://europa.eu/!TNjfPp
NAT/839 – EU Long-term vision for rural areas
Piroska Kállay

The Workers’ Group welcomes the European Commission’s long-term vision for rural areas. Proposals for an Action Plan, including a Rural Pact for engaging actors at EU, national, regional and local levels to support the vision, are also welcomed, as are those for the establishment of a Rural Observatory and a rural proofing mechanism. However, it is unclear what the implications of the design and content of the Commission’s new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and CAP strategic plans for each Member State will be for the long-term vision, and how the Commission should ensure consistency and added value between the CAP and other policies. Prosperity, defined as a socially and environmentally sustainable way of living, must be the aim for all citizens, wherever they live. If the Action Plan is delivered, there will be real grounds for an optimistic, confident future for rural Europe. The Commission commits to delivering through the Rural Pact and the Rural Action Plan; however, so much depends on having the buy-in of all Member States, regions and local communities.

More info at https://europa.eu/14XkXfW

NAT/853 – Improving environmental protection through criminal law
Ozlem Yildirim

The Commission's Directive review on the protection of the environment through criminal law addresses the Directive's main deficiencies and aims to tackle the rise in environmental criminal offences in Europe. There is an urgent need for improving the implementation of such law in Europe, and the replacement of said Directive with one with clearer provisions and a more extensive list of offences would unmistakably contribute to its application. Despite the endorsement of the inclusion of minimum standards – setting maximum limits for penalties for private persons and maximum limits for sanctions for legal persons – the Workers' Group believes these limits should be substantially increased in order to be truly effective, proportionate and dissuasive. A clear example is the reference to the term 'ecocide' in the recitals, which is otherwise absent in the operational part of the Directive. Furthermore, the jurisdiction of the European Public Prosecutor's Office should be extended to environmental crimes, promoting the creation of a Green European Public Prosecutor’s Office. It is vital that, in order to tackle issues of environmental criminal nature, concrete national strategies and obligations are implemented: promoting reporting duties, minimum requirements for resources, training and investigative tools. Additionally, those persons who report environmental offences or assist the investigation of environmental crimes should be provided with protection, as the role of the general public and civil society in detecting and reporting such crimes is vital to its rectification.

More info at https://europa.eu/IXPGTCM
ECO/572 – Fight the use of shell entities
Javier Doz Orrit

In order to guarantee a real recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to ensure an effective, fair taxation across the single market – one that also tackles the misuse of shell companies for tax evasion purposes. Measures such as consultations – both public and open to all stakeholders as well as targeted to national experts – the establishment of a common legal framework among Member States, or making the results of investigations into shell companies transparent to the public, are steps in the right direction towards addressing this issue. **On top of this, the fact that shell companies can also be used to facilitate undeclared work and avoid social security contributions suggests the need for addressing such concerns in further European legislation.** Therefore, it becomes necessary not only to ensure fair and effective taxation through the Directive on shell entities, but also to do so in a coordinated manner amongst Member States (e.g. setting a minimum monetary penalty) and with third countries, through the avoidance of double taxation. The abovementioned measures are in line with the proportionality principle, as they do not go beyond ensuring the necessary level of protection for the single market, with a moderate impact on companies.

Sufficient tax revenues are key in facilitating public investments aimed at achieving a greener and more digitalised single market. Accordingly, collaboration within Member States' administrations and a transparent exchange of information between tax authorities is paramount to both combat shell company misuse and establish a fair taxation environment.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!FWCNBm](https://europa.eu/!FWCNBm)

ECO/573 – Minimum effective taxation of companies
Petru Sorin Dandea

In agreement with both the EESC and the Commission, the Workers' Group concurs that "the effectiveness and fairness of the global minimum tax reform heavily relies on its worldwide implementation", ensuring uniform implementation of the OECD Model Rules in the EU through centrally enacted and uniform legislation. **On the other hand, specific provisions enacted by parliaments as deliberate incentives for investments and employment efforts should not be neutralised by the Model Rules.** In order to ensure full compliance with the Directive's provisions, penalties for non-compliance and calls on Member States to perform thorough tax inspections should be imposed – as well as the fair taxation of multinational companies, which has been a long-standing request from the general public. As the OECD is still working on drafting further rules and clarifying definitions, Member States should pay attention and include all recommendations from the ongoing negotiations in order to avoid amending or changing the directive. Any effort aimed at reducing compliance costs for European companies and tax authorities when devising the new taxing system will be gladly received, as the full implementation of Pillar 2 will require a significant amount of
resources. Tax authorities will be required to develop systems and routines to calculate and collect the new tax obligations, while trained personnel will be needed in order to ensure swift implementation, while providing resources for other international tax competences.

More info at https://europa.eu/!MVUyju
ECO/574 – European single access point (ESAP)
Florian Marin

The Workers’ Group supports the European single access point (ESAP), as a tool contributing to a more sustainable, digital and inclusive economy; reinforcing digital sovereignty and a better integration of capital markets. However, it also believes in the establishment of an advisory board – including members of civil society and social partners – and in a clearer synergy between Green Deal indicators and sustainable development goals. **The ESAP should ensure standard procedures, transparency, and data integrity and credibility of the source of information, as well as a clear distinction between financial and non-financial data and a proper control of the collection body for data protection.** Access to information should be non-discriminatory and free of charge, and functionalities must be user-friendly and accessible, as the tool has the potential to help SMEs increase their visibility and make the investment process less costly. Increasing the speed of information flow and setting common standards, with a focus on data, technology, and infrastructure, are key priorities for the EU. In order for this strategy to deliver better opportunities in company funding, work and EU market sectors, the ESAP should provide clear guidelines in relation to financial and digital literacy. By the same token, adequate working conditions for those workers involved in data collection and management should be a central concern within the initiative.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!BTF8Q8](https://europa.eu/!BTF8Q8)

TEN/760 – What conditions are needed for the energy and low-carbon transition to be socially acceptable?
Pierre Jean Coulon

To make the energy transition socially acceptable, taking into account feedback from the planning and implementation stages, the Workers’ Group calls on all stakeholders to improve the following: independence of the process, quality and accessibility of information, freedom and diversity of participation, clarity of participation arrangements, accountability and inclusion in decision-making, transparency, monitoring of a plan or project from cradle to grave, and also the need for the transition to be affordable and work well. **We call on the EU to do much more to promote fair distribution and "prosumption" by means of financial incentives, as this is the factor with the greatest impact on local acceptance of the energy transition.** The Workers’ Group would like to see consultation and even joint development with the public, particularly the social partners and civil society organisations, from the planning stage onwards, more extensive than at present, and careful coordination between objectives and planning at all levels, right up to local deployment of the transition. **This is essential if we are to make progress towards greater social acceptability and achieve our energy transition objectives at a good pace.**
More info at https://europa.eu/!G8gcRt
REX/536 – A new framework for free trade agreements, economic partnership agreements and investment agreements that guarantees the real involvement of civil society organisations and the social partners and ensures public awareness

Stefano Palmieri

The Worker's Group endorses the establishment of a new European trade policy serving the interests of workers, businesses, individuals and consumers alike. This plan will ensure the necessary tools for safeguarding both businesses and workers from unfair trade practices and consumers from harmful, unsustainable products. The new EU trade strategy consists of a dual approach: firstly, an innovative trade negotiation strategy focused on the update of the existing negotiation tools, and lastly, a revision of the mechanisms for agreement monitorisation, evaluation and implementation - the domestic advisory groups. As a result, such reform will generate support, and raise public awareness regarding the value of the signed trade, partnership and investment agreements among both the mentioned stakeholders and contracting parties (EU and partner countries). Moreover, it is paramount to emphasise the need for transparency during trade negotiations, ensuring the genuine involvement of civil society and social partners in the negotiation process through new standards and procedures. On top of this, European values and principles should be promoted through our trade agreements with partner countries - effectively enforcing human and social rights, the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation and environmental and safety standards.

More info at https://europa.eu/!3n6wtT

REX/542 – Improving the EU’s ability to react in the face of extreme events occurring outside its territory

Christophe Quarez

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) is no longer sufficiently capable nor broad enough to respond to the vast array of disasters and risks – climate change, pandemics or humanitarian crises among others – occurring both inside and outside EU territory. There is a notable need for better operational cooperation through addressing the link between civil protection and humanitarian aid, and for the creation of a European agency specifically devised to strengthen such foreign policy actions. External relations and events call for a diplomatic dimension of European civil protection - one that is unfortunately underdeveloped at the present moment. Consequently, it is imperative to improve areas concerning the reaction against extreme foreign events, such as prevention, preparedness and recovery, knowledge sharing and education, or the enhancement of cultural awareness in relation to civil protection training. Furthermore, voluntarism for civil protection and its standards
should be strengthened through the creation of a common certification system for voluntary teams in this field. After being triggered several times as part of the EU's crisis management framework during the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCPM was found to be insufficient in responding to large-scale emergencies. Likewise, the pandemic proved the need for further reinforcement, in regards to both the legal framework on health and civil protection and in ensuring the continuity of SMEs in the aftermath of a disaster.

More info at https://europa.eu/!4h4Pyq

May

SOC/708 – Learning and employability package

Tatjana Babrauskienė

The Workers’ Group calls on the European Commission and the Member States to strengthen adult learning, effectively implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. Notably, it stresses the importance of upskilling and reskilling in supporting the green and digital transitions of industries, and the social and economic responsibility of Member States and employers to ensure inclusive training for quality jobs through financing and incentives. It is necessary to ensure that workers receive effective guidance and counselling in choosing training courses that are relevant and tailored to their needs. Ultimately, the Workers’ Group reminds the Commission and Member states that the effective involvement and consultation of the social partners in the governance of adult learning, employee training and paid educational leave systems is crucial for their successful implementation.

More info at https://europa.eu/!GgqqGG

ECO/561 – Proposal for an own resources decision

Philip Von Brockdorff

The borrowing repayment of the NextGenerationEU initiative will need additional resources, and the EU having its own would help to ensure the normal continuity of other EU programmes and not having to increase the contribution directly from Member States. The ETS and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, being part of the same system to reduce carbon and prevent its leakage, are adequate tools. The redistribution of residual profits by multinational companies can also be a powerful tool, but its implementation is still a long way ahead and will be volatile. For the Workers' Group, these measures are positive and must be implemented ensuring fairness and justice, and with solidarity and a just transition in mind; as own resources would significantly increase the ability of the EU to absorb macroeconomic shocks and promote economic convergence.

More info at https://europa.eu/!MgCqpG
TEN/766 – New EU urban mobility framework
Mateusz Szymański

The challenges of environmental care and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic call for a necessary balance between environmental protection and inclusiveness of urban mobility. The need to reduce emissions should not translate into reduced mobility and transport exclusion. The Workers' Group believes the right to mobility should be recognised as a fundamental human right that, included in the European Pillar of Social Rights, promotes equality and equal opportunities. Employment in the area of urban mobility must be made more attractive, improving employment conditions through social dialogue, especially in the public transport sector. Moreover, the quality and accessibility of this particular sector must be enhanced, covering both cities and surrounding areas, due to its role on improving equal opportunities.

More info at https://europa.eu/!yFND6y

TEN/777 – Improved stability requirements for ro-ro passenger ships
Mateusz Szymański

The Workers’ Group sees the examination of this proposal as extremely difficult due to the complicated and unclear drafting of the text. The provisions and clarifications thus designed actually run counter to the objective of the proposal, which is to facilitate the use and application of the legal provisions therefore we recommend that its transparency be increased, including through a graphical presentation of the targeted solutions with appropriate explanations. The introduction of temporary solutions, as mentioned in the proposal, will create a situation of uncertainty and further problems in the future. Fleet investments in this transport sector are of a long-term nature. The outlook set out in the proposal should therefore take into account the realities of the sector.

More info at https://europa.eu/!xVgn3x

TEN/778 – REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy
Thomas Kattning

The Action is proposed facing the real threat of a gas cut, which can damage significantly EU's economy, particularly in those countries more dependent on Russia. It proposes a set of tools to provide a rapid development of alternatives to significantly reduce dependence on Russian gas and guarantee storage for the next winter. For the Workers' Group, it is fundamental that energy poverty is combatted in both long and short term measures, as well as solidarity ensured by cutting windfall profits and rechannelling ETS revenues. Diversification of supply and decisive increase in infrastructure and renewable energy production are necessary to ensure both energy independence and continue the
fight against climate change, while at the same time halting monetary support to Russian aggression and not relying excessively on other third countries of dubious democratic credentials.

More info at https://europa.eu/!RxDXK

TEN/779 – EU gas storage policy
Mateusz Szymański

The current situation with the invasion of Ukraine is threatening gas supply to many EU countries, and therefore ensuring enough is stored is fundamental. The proposal to ensure this storing levels, particularly before the abnormally low levels of reserves in Gazprom-owned storage facilities is important and outweighs the temporary costs it might bring. The Workers’ Group considers also fundamental to invest in additional infrastructure of storage and transport.

More info at https://europa.eu/!JgpG4
REX/545 – Supporting the independent media sector in Belarus

Tatjana Babrauskienė

The Workers' Group notes that dedicating resources to Belarus' free media and independent civil society should not be seen as charity but rather as a strategic investment in a safe and secure Europe, especially in the context of the current information war on our continent. We support the call to the Members States of the European Union to set a global example of support for media freedom in crisis by delivering assistance and extending emergency shelter and visa waivers to Belarusian journalists seeking refuge from repression. The Workers' Group underlines the importance of alternative ways to provide internet from the EU in case the state provider cuts access.

More info at https://europa.eu/!C9HMkK

REX/547 – The Global Gateway

Dumitru Fornea

The Global Gateway initiative presents an opportunity for investments and cooperation projects of EU and non-state actors in the EU to become better known and promoted around the world. It is in the EU’s strategic and economic interest to coordinate investment and development cooperation with likeminded countries, whilst also taking into account its own social, climate and ecological commitments. The Workers’ Group believes that European values should be respected and promoted through the implementation of projects under this mechanism, and underlines that transnational partnerships providing lasting economic and social benefits for local communities in partner countries should be subjected to a bottom-up approach. Only through the building of strong local value-added production chains, the strengthening of domestic markets in these countries, and the creation of high quality jobs and sustainable known-how transfers, will dependencies between countries be reduced.

More info at https://europa.eu/!dnXGqb
June

SOC/714 – EaSI ex-post evaluation – including the final evaluation of Progress Microfinance facility
Cinzia Del Rio

The Workers’ Group highlights the importance to increase the knowledge of the potential of the EaSI programme and its implementation at national level, with a strategic framework that complements its objectives. Furthermore, the Workers’ Group recommends that EaSI-funded measures be subject to ex ante and ex post monitoring and evaluation by national and local authorities. There is a need for a medium- and long-term impact assessment of the expected results of individual projects and their actual beneficiaries. Ultimately, communication channels should be improved between the European Commission through National contact points, the national governments and national stakeholders involving the local level, SMEs and small social enterprises, which face more difficulty to access the EaSI funds to carry out programs for targeted beneficiaries.

More info at https://europa.eu/!GdrDcv

INT/976 – Digital Decade Principles
Philip Von Brockdorff

The path to the Digital Decade is a plan to digitalise skills, infrastructure, businesses and public services in order to achieve the digital transformation of our society for 2030. While this focuses greatly on quantitative targets, the Declaration of Digital Rights and Principles is mostly qualitative, and fundamentally intertwined. For the Workers’ Group, it is key that progress is made in compliance with fundamental rights and in a human-centric and inclusive way, leaving no one behind, following also the recommendations of the Conference on the Future of Europe on this regard. Likewise any initiative must also seek to tackle, avoid and close the digital divides in terms of access to public and private services by aging and rural population.

More info at https://europa.eu/!DKj4WR
INT/985 – Europe's semiconductor ecosystem
Dirk Bergrath

The framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem (the so-called Chips Act), will increase the resilience and reinforce the European semiconductor industry, improving its transparency and cooperation along the value chain and reducing global dependencies in design, manufacturing, packaging or assembling. Nevertheless, its approach must focus on the industrial ecosystem as a whole, in order to make chip segments more crisis-resilient, modernise the sector and improve security of supply. Industrial policy choices should follow a broad set of criteria so as to diversify the sources of supply and improve the recycling of critical raw materials as part of an industrialised circular economy in microelectronics. However, despite the need for skill development measures necessary to ensure the provision of trained staff to implement said industrial policy support measures, from the Workers’ Group, we call upon the fact that this approach should not overlook the need to facilitate access for workers not classified as highly skilled, in order for the industry's ecosystem to be firmly anchored in Europe.

More info at https://europa.eu/!QtxjyW

NAT/848 – Revision of the ozone depleting substances regulation
Jacob Plat

The EU's first regulation on phasing out ozone-depleting substances (ODS), albeit successful, is not enough. Further reductions are both possible and necessary. From the Workers’ Group, we believe it is key to raise the level of ambition in order to meet the Green Deal objectives, and that this should come in the form of a transparent monitoring and registration process that is universally applicable to both all Member States and countries outside the EU. We support the regulation change on ODS aimed at reducing emissions, introducing minimum standards and maximum penalties to unlawful ODS production and import, recovering or destroying ODS employed in building insulation, and providing incentives for climate-friendly alternatives.

More info at https://europa.eu/!Xjnb9F

REX/554 – Instrumentalisation of migrants
Stefano Palmieri

Instrumentalisation of migrants means the deliberate attempt by a country to use people, migrants, as a destabilising threat to the borders of another. In particular, the case of Belarus with Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, is an example of this. These kind of actions do not only suppose a stability and security threat, but first and foremost a humanitarian crisis suffered by the people victim of instrumentalisation, with stories of migrants being
subjected to inhumane treatment. For the Workers' Group, it is fundamental that a common, not fragmented response, is articulated, fully recognising the rights of instrumentalised migrants, ensuring solidarity of the whole European Union with the border states affected, and providing an integrated action coordinated in material, administrative, legislative and political assistance.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!rJ9b8t](https://europa.eu/!rJ9b8t)

**CCMI/187 – The European Furniture industry – Its recovery towards an innovative, green and circular economy**

Rolf Gehring

The right balance between economic growth, sustainability and social wellbeing is the right target for the future of the EU furniture sector and considers that businesses need a coherent intellectual property legislative framework that protects their interests and is fit for the green and digital transition. Furthermore, the Workers' Group wishes to call for a tariff reduction or elimination for imported primary and secondary wood raw materials and requests that policy makers ensure that the sustainability criteria in trade agreements is enforced and that imports include verification criteria regarding working conditions, freedom of association and fair treatment of workers. Ultimately, human rights should be part of due diligence procedures, fully respecting the ILO conventions on human and workers’ rights.

More info at [https://europa.eu/!fthqTg](https://europa.eu/!fthqTg)
July

SOC/726 – Combatting violence against women
José Antonio Moreno Díaz

The adoption of a directive on combating violence against women from an intersectional perspective is welcomed, as more than a third of all women resident in the EU have suffered violence at some point in their lives. From the Workers' Group, however, we believe the directive could have been broader, to include intra-familiar and domestic violence. Likewise, violence against women should be included in the list of EU crimes in Article 83.1 of TFEU. This directive is particularly important now when the far right is attacking equality and feminism, challenging women's human rights and their right to be free from violence for the very fact of being women.

More info at https://europa.eu/!VMHYV6

SOC/735 – COVID-19 - Sustaining EU preparedness and response: looking ahead
Sára Felszeghi

The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic will help the EU to better manage health threats and communicable diseases, strengthening the response and coordination between Member States and at global level. In order to do so, the Workers' Group believes the EU must develop a response capability prepared to respond immediately in the event of further variants or other pandemics; a strategy that involves all elements of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, long-term care and the provision of economic resources. Within these stages, an emphasis should be placed on action plans regarding the following areas: disinformation, vaccination, the implementation of national public health tasks, ventilation (both natural and mechanical), epidemiological surveillance, the setting up of education and monitoring and rating systems, and the facilitation of further rehabilitation and mental health professionals for long COVID patients. Last, but not least, we strongly support the efforts of the EU and Member States in supporting partner countries in the African Union, following the principle of solidarity.

More info at https://europa.eu/!Mqw9T4
INT/987 – The cost of non-Europe - the benefits of the single market
Philip von Brockdorff

In view of the Workers' Group, national legal texts potentially hindering the internal market must be notified to the European Commission and must be commented upon and evaluated. We call upon the European Commission to address the anti-competitive effect of territorial supply constraints which are hampering the development of the single market as well as for an effective implementation and enforcement of directives already negotiated and voted upon.

The Workers' Group recommends more effective national policy measures and providing mobility incentives with an emphasis on active labour market policies such as in-work benefits for EU workers. Furthermore, a coordinated approach between Member States is recommended on the marketing of products affected by the crisis in Ukraine which has created formidable supply restrictions. In regard to national certification, Members States should commit themselves towards less restrictive national measures via the "reinforced cooperation route". Finally, the Workers' Group is of the view that "open strategic autonomy" should be adopted, especially in key sectors, to help build resilience, diversification and an ambitious agenda for commerce.

More info at https://europa.eu/!PWBcDf

NAT/851 – Sustainable products initiative, including Eco-design Directive
Thomas Wagnsonner

The Workers' Group stresses that the circular economy will only succeed if all participants – workers, consumers, producers – and authorities are properly involved and informed. A successful implementation of the sustainable products initiative package needs clear, sound and consistent rules to give sustainable products a fair competitive opportunity and ensure an inclusive circular transition. The Sustainable Products Initiative will help to increase the use of sustainable products. Given the current crises (e.g. Crisis in the Ukraine), a faster and more ambitious implementation of the circular economy package is mandatory to move away from Europe's resource dependency.

We welcome the new elements of the regulation, such as the extended scope or the new eodesign requirements (durability, repairability, recycling, environmental impact, CO2 emissions, etc.). The information requirements of the digital product passport and labels, emphasising the importance of correct and relevant information, are very important for consumers. The sustainable use of products by consumers should therefore be supported. The social dimension has to be strengthened in the requirements from sustainable products. It was regrettably not taken into account in the regulation. It is absolutely necessary that all three dimensions – economic, social and environmental sustainability – must always be dealt with in tandem. Therefore the Workers' Group calls
on the Commission to recheck the regulation. It must definitely include product-specific social aspects as well.

More info at https://europa.eu/!XYJtW9
ECO/587 – Digital Taxation
Petru Dandea

In order to prevent the tax avoidance undertaken by big digital giants, the EU must make efforts for Pillar 1 of the draft agreement by the OECD to be implemented, as a solely European solution for the correct taxation of digital corporations is not possible in a setting where these companies operate globally. This Pillar would allow a uniform global taxation system for multinational corporations and prevent the current aggressive tax planning, ensuring the profits made are taxed fractionally between the jurisdictions and the states in which they operate.

More info at https://europa.eu/!fB4CqR

ECO/593 – Central Securities Depositories Review
Christophe Lefèvre

The Commission's proportionate initiatives to replace existing passporting requirements with a notification, as well as a proposal for better supervisory cooperation by establishing appropriate, but not duplicate, supervisor colleges are welcomed by the Workers' Group. Concerning the provision of banking-type ancillary services, we see further opportunities in solutions based on settlement in central bank money. To further decrease a range of different risks, greater use should be made of the existing TARGET2-Securities (T2S) multicurrency central bank money securities settlement platform.

We see to the benefit of supplementing the existing Commission proposal with the provisions on recognition of T2S's central role for the European securities settlement infrastructure, while also solving, albeit partially, the issue of the underdevelopment of banking-type ancillary services among Central Securities Depositories (CSDs). The Workers' Group notes that the most controversial part of the proposal – the "two-step" approach to the potential imposition of mandatory buy-ins (MBIs) – remains a well-balanced option. MBIs should not be considered until underlying reasons for settlement failures are examined in detail and clarity is obtained on whether other measures to reduce settlement failures will achieve satisfactory results.

More info at https://europa.eu/!nPvKDV
TEN/773 – Digital identity, data sovereignty and the path towards a just digital transition for citizens living in the information society

Dumitru Fornea

Technological progress in digital terms has provided for a great amount of opportunities, but this did not come without risks. For the Workers' Group, the notion of 'human in command' sponsored by the EESC since the beginning of this debate remains central: these improvements in society must not discriminate or compulsory force citizens into them. Digital identity, digital means of payment, and incorporation into virtual reality platforms must remain complementary and not substitute reality. Moreover, special attention must be paid to protect human rights, in particular against social scoring, facial recognition, monitoring of habits and behaviours; as well as to protect data integrity and sovereignty, in particular with specially sensitive ones such as biodata.

Civil society must be included at all stages of the decision and implementation, and free and informed consent must always be present in any data transaction. Likewise, with the view on the future and seizing the opportunities while tackling the risks, we call for a strong European digital education system preparing the citizens for the technological challenges, and to navigate them with digital literacy to find high quality jobs, as well as engaging employees in the digital transition and ensuring social protection programs are in place to make this transition fair.

More info at https://europa.eu/!Qdk3kD

REX/543 – Analysis the role of organised civil society in the new EU- Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific (OEACP) agreement, including the situation of the EPAs in this framework

Carlos Manuel Trindade

The EU has long established a framework of values and objectives governing its relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, namely: democracy, good governance, human rights, inclusive sustainable growth and decent work or human development, among others – to which the objective of security must be added. The Workers’ Group supports the new OEACP Agreement, commending the parties for their efforts and commitments made using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and proposes to the Commission that said Agreement, along with the Economic Partnership Agreements, should be the subject of reflection and new decisions derivative of two key global events: the experience of COVID-19 and the geopolitical consequences of the Ukraine war, which have created the need for more complex and urgent responses in the ACP States.

The Workers’ Group is pleased that the Agreement has recognised the importance and role played by civil society organisations and social partners, but also highlights the need
to create solutions that overcome existing difficulties, such as the technical capacity and the financial support of such organisations. For this purpose, it urges the Commission to put financial instruments to support programmes and foresight projects, with the aim to strengthen democratic civil society organisations and social partners under the new Agreement.

More info at https://europa.eu/!8CyYjQ

REX/544 – The new EU-US Trade and Technology Council in action: priorities for business, workers and consumers and necessary safeguards
Tanja Buzek

The new EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC) can become a tool to reboot our partnership on both sides of the Atlantic, building a positive transatlantic agenda and building trust based on mutual and stable cooperation. Both parties must engage in promoting a permanent structure for the TTC, with the aim of providing a more strategic and horizontal approach on trade and technology issues; all while protecting our values and rules-based trade. As two of the world’s leading economies, together with like-minded partners, there is a great responsibility for the EU and the US to push forward a cooperation framework which supports an open and sustainable economy, free and fair trade and respects democratic values, decent work and human rights.

The Workers’ Group believes that, in order to respond to market disruption, the transatlantic partners must find ways to strengthen the resilience of our open democratic societies by ensuring our global value and supply chains, energy security – all while strengthening multilateralism and tackling climate change. Transparency and strong stakeholder engagement on both sides is the only way for the TTC to reach said targets. Nevertheless, we express our regret in regards to the lack of renewal of the expert group on trade agreements, as well as on the imbalance of labour democracy due to the non-ratification of six ILO fundamental Conventions on the tripartite Trade and Labour Dialogue.

More info at https://europa.eu/!nYhgMd

REX/553 – Youth policy in the Western Balkans, as part of the Innovation Agenda for the Western Balkans
Andrej Zorko

Despite sound progress in developing youth policy frameworks in the Western Balkans, it is crucial to further invest in youth policies addressing youth development challenges – allocating sufficient and transparent budget for said policies as a prerequisite for facilitating positive changes and improving the situation of young people. To this end, and for policies to be informed, the collecting and processing of high-quality youth sensitive data needs to be significantly improved. The Workers’ Group considers that a greater involvement of social partners and civil society organisations is necessary in order to fight
against poverty and improve the quality of education, social rights and prospects of young people. Consequently, direct support must be provided from the EU, as well as the necessary reinforcement of EU programs and regional structures that provide opportunities for education, mobility, volunteering and employment.

Additionally, the Workers’ Group welcomes initiatives such as the Economic and Investment Plan, calling for the improvement of labour market participation; the Youth Guarantee, which should be followed by an increase of the capacities of the public employment services and their staff; or the European Year of Youth, whose approach should not be limited to the EU, but should also include young people from all Western Balkans partners. Cooperation, particularly in the regional sphere, between partners is paramount to address the issue of youth unemployment, as is the need of strengthening youth organisations and networks. Political education, representation and the improvement of youth participation are a must, as taken into account on the Innovation Agenda for the Western Balkans.

More info at https://europa.eu/!hCh6kJ

CCMI/188 – Textile Strategy
Florian Marin

In the opinion of the Workers’ Group more emphasis is needed on social aspects in the textile sector. Further initiatives should be prepared related to social dialogue and collective bargaining. We point out the need for strict measures that prohibit economic relations with entities that use child labour or fail to respect decent working conditions. There is also the need for investments and programmes to consolidate the capacity of inspection institutions and the operational capacity of the social partners for monitoring global agreements, and fundamental and workers’ rights.

Member States should receive additional assistance regarding cross-border cooperation, market surveillance, effective control and harmonised standards. The Workers’ Group is calling for national campaigns for promoting textile sector labour opportunities, as well as financing programmes for upskilling and reskilling the labour force, together with the implementation of vocational training and apprenticeship programmes.

More info at https://europa.eu/!RdvYG9