



Informal video conference of ministers of employment and social policy 13 October 2020

Chair: Hubertus Heil, Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and **Dr. Franziska Giffey**, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

The morning session will start at 10.00 and end at 12.30. **Ministers will hold a policy debate entitled: 'Worker participation and support for workers in restructuring'.**

The meeting will resume at 14.00. Ministers will hold a debate entitled: **'Equal participation of women and men in the labour market'.**

Under 'Any other business', the presidency will inform ministers about the agreement with the European Parliament on a proposal for a decision on cooperation between Public Employment Services and the Tripartite Social Summits on 23 June 2020 and 14 October 2020.

The Commission will brief ministers on its proposal to amend the Directive on carcinogens and mutagens at work.

Online **press conference** with ministers Heil and Giffey and Commissioners Dalli and Schmit at the end of the meeting, +/-16.30.

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[Employment and social policy ministers' video conference page](#)

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the Press Office.

Worker participation and support for workers in restructuring - policy debate

Based on a presidency steering note, ministers will hold the debate against the background of a major increase in restructurings and job losses across the EU in 2020. Among the worst affected are the transport (including air transport) and hospitality sectors (hotel/restaurants). In these sectors in particular, the pandemic may continue to represent an existential threat to many businesses, both large and small. Even though the current crisis is the main reason for the increase in restructurings and job losses, it has also exacerbated existing negative trends of restructuring caused by the green and digital transitions.

In the last few months the EU has adopted an unprecedented set of measures at national and EU level. To counter the negative social and economic impact of restructurings, the EU already provides financial support through funds, such as the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Globalisation Adjustment fund (EGF). In relation to the green and digital transitions, upskilling and reskilling policies will be crucial.

In this context, ministers will be invited to provide their views about the following questions:

- How do you plan to ensure that your skills investments and use of EU funds support successful restructuring strategies?
- In the context of the COVID-19 crisis and its economic effects, which measures on EU or Member State level could support the aim to improve the protection of workers right to information and consultation in restructuring situations?

Equal participation of women and men in the labour market - policy debate

Ministers will hold the debate with the aim to exchange views on ways to further promote gender equality and counter segregation of women and men in the labour market. Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the EU. It is also a strongly supported policy goal which requires further efforts, in particular the inclusion of gender equality in all policy areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted long-standing challenges related to inequalities - different levels of employment and income, and women spending more time providing unpaid care than men. At the same time, the current crisis has shown the critical importance of certain, often low-paid occupations in which women predominate, such as healthcare or retail. On the other hand, women are seriously under-represented in the corresponding leadership and decision-making positions, for instance in the healthcare sector.

Against this background, the presidency invites ministers to exchange views on the following questions:

- What is the best way of promoting gender equality in the labour market at EU level?
- What measures exist to combat the horizontal and vertical segregation of women and men in the labour market? Please recommend the most effective measures implemented in your Member State

Other business:

In a public session, the presidency will inform ministers about the agreement reached between the Council and the European Parliament on a proposal for a decision amending Decision No 573/2014/EU on cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) [11090/20 ADD1](#).

The presidency will also provide information on the Tripartite Social Summit held in June 2020 and will brief ministers about the next Tripartite Social Summit to be held on 14 October 2020.

In a public session, the Commission will present to ministers a proposal for a directive amending Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work [11188/20](#).

[COVID-19 outbreak \(background information\)](#)