



Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council **Luxembourg, 16 June 2022**

Chairs: Olivier Dussopt, Minister for Labour, Full Employment and Economic Inclusion, Isabelle Rome, Minister with responsibility for Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities, attached to the Prime Minister

The meeting will start at 9.30. A press conference will take place at the end of the meeting (+/- 18.10).

The presidency will inform delegations about the state of play as regards the draft directive on improving working conditions in platform work.

Ministers will hold a policy debate on the European Semester and discuss national targets for reaching the objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan.

Ministers also plan to adopt two recommendations, on individual learning accounts and on a fair transition towards climate neutrality.

In the afternoon, ministers will hold another policy debate on the employment of persons with disabilities.

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

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

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

Platform work

In December 2021, the European Commission presented a proposal for a directive on improving working conditions in platform work.

The goal of the proposed legislation is to ensure that people working through digital labour platforms can have their employment status correctly determined in relation to their actual working arrangements and thus enjoy the corresponding labour rights and social benefits.

The proposed directive would also give people working through platforms more rights when it comes to the protection of their personal data when it is used in algorithmic management by digital labour platforms. They will also have the right to contest automated decisions.

Today, over 28 million people in the EU work through digital labour platforms. In 2025, that number is expected to reach 43 million people. The vast majority of these people are genuinely self-employed. However, the Commission estimates that 5.5 million are incorrectly classified as self-employed.

Since the publication of the proposal, seven working party meetings have been held and the French presidency has drafted a compromise text on the first two chapters of the proposed directive. The French presidency will present a progress report at the upcoming meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO Council).

[Progress report](#)

European Semester

Ministers will hold a policy debate on the European Semester and in particular on issues such as its governance and the country-specific recommendations for 2022. The outcome of this discussion, and similar debates of the ministers for economy and finance and the ministers for European affairs, will be discussed by the European Council on 23-24 June. The European Semester is a cycle of economic, fiscal, labour and social policy coordination within the EU.

On 23 May, the Commission issued its proposals on country-specific integrated recommendations. The country-specific recommendations provide guidance to member states on macro-economic, budgetary, employment, social and other structural policies and are intended to strengthen economic growth, stimulate job creation and support upward social convergence. The EPSCO Council expects to approve the employment and social policy aspects of these country-specific recommendations.

The Council will also endorse the opinion of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Protection Committee (SPC) on these country-specific recommendations for 2022 and their assessments of the implementation of the 2019 and 2020 country-specific recommendations.

The EMCO and SPC are preparatory bodies for the Employment and Social Policy Council.

Porto Social Summit: one year later

At the Porto Social Summit, EU member states welcomed the new headline targets of the European Social Rights action plan (78% of the population in employment, 60% of adults trained every year and 15 million fewer people at risk of poverty and social exclusion).

To achieve this, member states were asked to set ambitious (and voluntary) national targets in order to meet the European headline targets. After the presentation by the chairs of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee on the process of setting national targets for 2030, ministers will exchange views.

[Background note](#)

Council recommendation on individual learning accounts

The Council plans to adopt a recommendation on individual learning accounts. Its aim is to help working-age adults to upgrade and adapt their skills in the context of the green and digital transitions and the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan target of achieving at least 60% participation in adult learning (by 2030).

The Council is recommending that member states consider establishing individual learning accounts as a means of enabling individuals to participate in labour-market-relevant training and – if they decide to establish individual learning accounts – put in place an enabling framework.

The enabling framework includes recommendations ranging from ensuring the availability of career guidance services and opportunities for validation of achievements, to establishing a national public training registry and developing a single national digital portal for accessing the learning account and navigating the registry.

[Council recommendation on individual learning accounts](#)

Council recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality

The European Green Deal, a set of policy initiatives to make the EU climate neutral in 2050, stresses that the transition must be fair and inclusive, putting people first and paying particular attention to supporting those who will face the greatest challenges.

The impact of the green transition will vary by sector, occupation, region and country. For instance, job losses are expected in some mining activities and fossil-fuel based energy production, as well as in parts of the automotive sector. Conversely, new job opportunities are expected in the circular economy, sustainable transport and energy production.

The transition will also have an impact on energy and transport costs, notably due to the internalisation of emissions costs in price formation or to the costs of adaptation towards higher-efficiency, lower-emission alternatives.

Member states therefore plan to adopt a recommendation which aims to ensure that the Union's transition towards a climate-neutral and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 is socially fair and leaves nobody behind.

The recommendation contains guidance to provide support to quality employment, for instance by facilitating access to finance and markets for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It also focuses on education and training measures and invites member states to integrate the employment and social aspects of the green transition into the development and implementation of relevant national strategies.

Other proposals concentrate on the fairness of taxation and social protection systems and on ensuring access to essential services and affordable housing for the people and households most affected by the green transition.

[Council recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality](#)

Social imbalances procedure

The Employment and Social Policy Committees have also prepared an opinion on a proposal by Belgium and Spain – made at the EPSCO Council meeting in October 2021 – to strengthen the social dimension of the European Semester through the introduction of a social imbalances procedure. The EMCO and SPC chairs will inform delegations about this opinion.

[Opinion of the EMCO and SPC committees](#)

Employment of persons with disabilities (policy debate)

It is estimated that one fifth of the EU population (i.e. almost 87 million people) currently have some form of disability. Persons with disabilities still face numerous obstacles to accessing their rights and their autonomy. For example, in 2021 only 50.8% of persons with disabilities were in employment compared to 75% of those without disabilities. 37.6% of persons with disabilities were inactive compared to 17.6% of those without disabilities.

A priority of the EU's disability policy is the integration and development of persons with disabilities in the labour market. This year, the Commission will present a package of measures intended to improve the labour market prospects of persons with disabilities. This 'employment package' is flagship initiative of the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030, and aims to improve their labour market rights.

Improving the employment rate of persons with disabilities and closing the gap between them and persons without disabilities requires action at several levels, including:

- the development of accessibility and reasonable accommodation to meet individual needs
- the acquisition by persons with disabilities of skills in line with market needs, including skills related to the green and digital transitions
- investment in intervention services

In this context, ministers will exchange views on how to remove disincentives to hiring persons with disabilities, encourage their acceptance by their colleagues, and take effective measures to promote their integration into the labour market.

[Background note](#)

Any other business

The presidency will inform delegations about a number of legislative files:

- directive on adequate minimum wages. The presidency will inform ministers about the work carried out during the current semester, in the context of the negotiations with the Parliament, which led to a provisional agreement on 6 June.
- directive on equal pay for equal work between women and men. The Presidency will brief ministers on the state of play on this dossier, on which the Council had concluded its general approach on 6 December and on which Parliament adopted its negotiating mandate in April 2022.
- directive on gender balance on company boards. The presidency will inform ministers about the work carried out during the current semester, in the context of the negotiations with the Parliament, which followed the general approach reached in the Council on 14 March and led to a provisional agreement on 7 June.
- directive on equal treatment. The Presidency will take stock of the state of play of the file, which is still pending, given persistent political blockages in the Council.

- revision of the regulations on the coordination of social security systems

The presidency will also provide information on the report by the European Institute for Gender Equality on combatting psychological violence and coercive control, as well as on its presidency conferences.

Delegations will also receive information from the Commission about the EU's initiatives in the areas of employment and social affairs in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the EU's implementation of its LGBTIQ strategy.

The Czech delegation will inform delegations about the work programme for its presidency of the Council of the EU (which will start on 1 July).
