



Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

Luxembourg, 9 October 2023

Ministers of employment and social affairs will gather in Luxembourg on 9 October at 09.30. The meeting will be chaired by Yolanda Díaz, second vice-president of the Government of Spain and acting minister for work and social economy, José Luis Escrivá, acting minister for inclusion, social security and migration and Ignacio Álvarez Peralta, secretary of state for social rights. The Commission will be represented by Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, and Helena Dalli, Commissioner for Equality.

During the morning session, chaired by vice-president Díaz and secretary of state Álvarez Peralta, ministers will discuss the European semester: they will hold a policy debate on the impact of new technologies on labour and the path towards a just digital transition, followed by the adoption of the 2023 employment guidelines. Ministers will also aim to reach a political agreement on a recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions. Furthermore, they will approve conclusions on mental health and precarious work and on equal access for Roma to adequate housing.

Over lunch, ministers will exchange views on the uses of time and working time.

During the afternoon session, scheduled to start at 15.00 and chaired by minister Escrivá, ministers will hold a debate on the consolidation and strengthening of the European social protection systems. They will also be invited to approve conclusions on social protection for the self-employed.

Press conferences:

- 9 October, +/- 13.15: Press conference with vice-president and acting minister for work and social economy Yolanda Díaz and commissioner Nicolas Schmit
- 9 October, +/- 17.15: Press conference with acting minister for inclusion, social security and migration José Luis Escrivá and commissioner Nicolas Schmit

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[Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council - meeting page](#)

[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.

European Semester and policy debate on a fair digital transition

Under the European Semester heading, ministers will hold a debate on the impact of new technologies on labour and the European pathway towards a just digital transition.

Furthermore, they will endorse key messages on employment and social challenges, as identified by the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee, and they will adopt the 2023 employment guidelines.

The European Semester is the EU's framework for coordinating and monitoring economic, employment and social policies. The annual cycle starts in November when the Commission sets the priorities for the year to come, and ends in October of the following year, when national governments submit their draft budgetary plans.

[Steering note by the presidency – policy debate on a just digital transition](#)

[Draft Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the member states](#)

[European Semester \(background information\)](#)

Development of supportive frameworks for the social economy

Ministers will aim to reach a political agreement on a recommendation on developing framework conditions for the social economy. The social economy accounts for more than 13 million jobs in Europe is active in many economic sectors, but it presents uneven development across the EU.

The first-ever recommendation on this topic aims to foster access to the labour market and social inclusion by calling on member states to promote an enabling environment for the social economy. The enabling framework conditions could take into account access to funding, to markets, taxation aspects and visibility and recognition of the social economy, among other aspects. Member states will adopt or update their relevant national strategies within two years from the adoption of the recommendation.

[Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions \(political agreement\)](#)

Mental health and precarious work

The Council will seek to approve conclusions on mental health and precarious work, with the aim of further promoting and implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. This is the first set of Council conclusions dealing with the link between mental health and conditions of employment, with a focus on precarious work, including poorly paid and unprotected jobs.

The Council invites member states to promote quality employment policies, considering new forms of work, and to strengthen public systems aimed at safeguarding mental health at work, including training and research on the impact of precarious conditions on workers' well-being.

The Commission is invited to reflect on an adequate policy for addressing psychosocial risks at work, while the social partners are called on to continue to promote interventions in workplaces to promote psychosocial well-being.

[Draft conclusions on mental health and precarious work](#)

Equal access for Roma to adequate and desegregated housing

Following the Council recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation adopted in 2021, this set of draft conclusions addresses the key issue of housing. The conclusions aim to improve the housing situation of Roma and to eradicate segregation, in accordance with the national Roma strategies developed under the existing EU policy framework in this area.

[Draft conclusions on measures to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and desegregated housing, and to address segregated settlements](#)

Consolidating and strengthening European social protection systems

Ministers will hold a policy debate on consolidating and strengthening European social protection systems. The main elements of the debate will be the lessons learnt from responses to recent crises, using new technologies to strengthen resilience of social protections systems, and measures or reforms to ensure social protection for the most vulnerable citizens. The debate is expected to also touch upon issues related to telework, digital nomads and other new forms of work.

[Steering note for the policy debate](#)

Better access to social protection for self-employed workers

Ministers will seek to approve the first-ever set of conclusions on social protection focused exclusively on the self-employed, building on the Council recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed adopted in 2019 and on the lessons learnt from its implementation.

More than 15 million self-employed people in the EU do not have access to unemployment benefits in case of cessation of activities, while self-employed are at a higher risk of poverty than workers in standard forms of employment. The social protection of the self-employed is particularly relevant in the current process of the transformation of ways of working.

Against this background, the Council invites member states to address remaining national gaps in access to social protection for the self-employed and to ensure an adequate level of protection to this group.

[Draft conclusions on social protection for the self-employed](#)

Other business

Under other business, the presidency and the Commission will inform ministers on the state of play on the proposed directive on combatting violence against women and domestic violence, they will share information about activities related to legal migration and on the Tripartite social summit, which will take place on 25 October under the title “Delivering on building blocks for a successful European Economy for workers and companies”.

Ministers will also be informed on events organised by the Spanish presidency.

Also on the agenda is information from the Commission on the implementation of the European Child Guarantee and the national action plans, the proposed directive establishing a European Disability Card and a European Parking Card for persons with disabilities, and the report on upskilling pathways.

[Violence against women and domestic violence: Council agrees position on draft EU law \(press release, 9 June 2023\)](#)

[Activities related to legal migration – Information from the presidency and the Commission](#)

[Tripartite social summit – Information from the presidency and the Commission](#)

[Information on the conferences and high-level meetings organised by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)

[Access to key services for children in need: Council agrees European Child Guarantee \(press release, 14 June 2021\)](#)

[European disability card – EC proposal](#)

[Upskilling Pathways evaluation package adopted \(EC press release, 17 July 2023\)](#)
