

New ways of working, learning and social protection in the temporary agency work sector

Joint Recommendations on Social Innovation as follow-up of a joint EU Sectoral Social Dialogue project

Brussels, 1st December 2020

Background

In 2019/2020, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa conducted a joint project in cooperation with the Centre for European Policy Studies and the Catholic University of Leuven/HIVA on Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry.

The project was instrumental to show that the sector of temporary agency work has been driving Social Innovation for many years, especially by reconciling the need for flexible work (including the three dimensions of diverse forms of labour contractual arrangement, diverse forms of working time and diverse forms of work location) and the requirement to protect temporary agency workers. This core element of the temporary agency work sector was at the centre of the 2008 Joint Declaration on the Directive on temporary agency work, in which the sectoral social partners agreed “that temporary work agencies should not compete to the detriment of workers’ rights and working conditions.”¹ In the context of the current COVID-19 crisis, the temporary agency work sector and the social innovation practices put in place by the social partners contributed to increasing labour market resilience, protecting workers, safeguarding work and preparing for an economic and social recovery.

The project analysed 15 case studies of social innovation in the areas of training, working conditions and social protection. Started in 2019 against the background of European and international debates on the future of work, the modernisation of social protection schemes and social innovation, the theme of social innovation got even more importance and relevance in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on ways of working and learning, but also with regard to ensuring protection of workers. These Joint Recommendations present the lessons learned from the joint project and aim to provide guidance for moving ahead.

General Recommendations on Social Innovation by the Sectoral Social Partners

1. Foster the sectoral social dialogue and the capacity of sectoral social partners to develop and strengthen social innovation in the temporary agency work industry, taking account of the fact that the majority of social innovation practices are based on social partner actions (bipartite funds, new institutions set by collective labour agreements and new projects to address labour market challenges) and take place in countries with strong social dialogue.
2. Set appropriate, enabling framework conditions for temporary agency work, which allows sectoral social partners to develop and implement innovative solutions for working, learning and social protection, enhancing labour market resilience.
3. Strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between the temporary agency work industry, stakeholders and policymakers in the areas of training, working conditions and social protection to develop new and innovative solutions in a collaborative way. Dialogue and exchange should foster the transferability and

¹ Joint Declaration of the sectoral social partners on the Directive on working conditions for temporary agency workers, 28th May 2008

scalability of social innovation practices across countries and sectors and it should include especially education training providers and institutions arranging social protection.

4. Facilitate access to funding for national social partners at European level through the new European Social Fund and the Next Generation EU Recovery Fund, as well as at national level to put in place, develop and sustain social innovation practices.
5. Promote the exchange of social innovation practices at EU level to foster mutual learning and develop social innovation across Europe. The EU discussions on the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Skills Agenda and the Next Generation EU policy response to the Covid-19 crisis provide the relevant policy frameworks for discussing social innovation practices.
6. Capitalise on social innovation to drive the economic and social recovery in times of Covid-19, as also emphasised by the EU sectoral social partners in their 2020 joint recommendations on the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.²

Specific recommendations with regard to the areas of training, working conditions and social protection

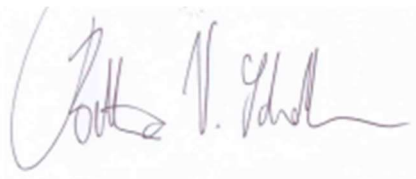
7. Take account of and build on new trends and technology in the world of work, such as automation, digitalisation and artificial intelligence when designing social innovation solutions in the area of training, working conditions and social protection.³
8. On social innovation in the area of social protection:
 - a) Foster the setting up and development of complementary schemes of social protection that are reinforcing governmental schemes, while ensuring the transferability and portability of rights for temporary agency workers.
 - b) When developing tailor-made, national solutions of social innovation in the area of social protection, get inspiration on the innovative practices developed by Ebitemp in Italy to provide services to workers (training, health services and social protection), Interimairre Sante in France to offer a complementary health insurance, Tempcare in Switzerland offering a sick-leave insurance, the Prospective Statement in the Netherlands, facilitating access to mortgages by sharing information on the labour market prospects of temporary agency workers and CAP Inter in Belgium, which enables employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
9. On social innovation in training:
 - a) Capitalise and build on the role played by bipartite training funds in those countries where they exist, considering that there is a large diversity in the institutional framework for training provision and not a one size-fits all approach for training schemes.
 - b) Consider the lessons learned in providing tailored solutions for training and learning, including a focus on soft skills and dual learning, as well as the use of digital tools for skills enhancement and training. Build on the experience of the social innovation practices in the area of training, including Testyourselfie (Belgium/France/Luxembourg and the Netherlands), Open Badges/global, Headai/Finland, Phyd/Italy, Learn4Job/Belgium and the Grand Ecole de l'Alternance/France.

² "Protecting workers, safeguarding work and preparing for an economic and social recovery", WEC-Europe/Uni-Europa Joint Recommendations of April 2020

³ The full report of the project and the Executive Summary with the main conclusions are available on the social partners websites: www.weceurope.org and www.uni-europa.org/category/temp-and-agency-workers/

10. On social innovation in the area of working conditions:

- a) Build on the expertise and knowledge of sectoral social partners to develop policies and frameworks to promote health and safety at work, to prevent accidents at work and fostering labour market integration of people with disabilities, and promoting of sustainable employment (employment that is healthy, safe and allows workers to develop their skills in a lifelong learning perspective).
- b) Take into account the experience and lessons learned of the practices All-in-1 for temporary agency workers/The Netherlands, Yes to disabled employees/Poland, Prevention & Interim/Belgium and Action Protocol/Spain when designing national solutions for social innovation in the area of working conditions.



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