

European Year of Skills: Social Dialogue as a Driving Force Forward

EU Sectoral Social Partners for temporary agency work agree on commitments and joint recommendations on training for inclusive and resilient labour markets

In a changing world of work, skills have become the new currency – the key asset that workers need to be employable sustainably. In the temporary agency work sector, access to training is particularly critical as the qualification levels of temporary agency workers vary significantly across countries and agency workers are predominantly young.

The European Year of Skills is a welcomed initiative to address rising labour shortages in Europe and foster labour market resilience. To make it a success for both workers and companies in Europe, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa, as sectoral social partners for temporary agency work, put forward the following commitments and recommendations.

Commitments of the Sectoral Social Partners

1. The World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa support the European Year of Skills and are committed to contributing to debates, events, and actions at the national level to foster training and skills enhancement.
2. Effective access to training and skills enhancement can best be achieved based on social innovation. Therefore, the EU sectoral social partners have committed themselves to implement in 2023-2024 a capacity-building project, with the support of the European Union, focused on supporting national social partners, particularly in eastern and southern Europe, in putting in place socially innovative practices for skills enhancement and training.
3. As skills and training are becoming increasingly important in the context of digital and green transitions, the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa will work jointly with their members and affiliates in improving access to skills required for these transitions.
4. As also illustrated in a project implemented by the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europe¹ the sector can draw upon the experience of a variety of socially innovative projects already implemented by the temporary agency work industry and the sectoral social partners at the national level, such as the [open-badges](#) project in several European countries, [Learn4job](#) in Belgium and the [Grand Ecole de l' Alternance](#) in France.
5. The temporary agency work industry in Europe is committed to facilitating access to skills enhancement and training for agency workers, which is done especially through training schemes at the level of the temporary work agencies, dual learning schemes and bipartite training funds. Based on a recent World Employment Confederation survey, 330.000 workers in Italy and 15.147 agency workers in Switzerland benefit from training each year.²

¹ [Social Innovation in the temporary agency work industry \(2020\)](#)

² World Employment Confederation (2022) [Social Impact Report: Overcoming Labour Shortages](#)

In France, 380.000 training programmes have been implemented in 2022 for agency workers.

Joint Recommendations of the Sectoral Social Partners to EU policymakers and national governments

1. Strengthen non-formal and informal learning and the recognition of prior learning. Value the role played by bi-partite training funds established in the temporary agency work industry in offering training, learning opportunities, as well as counselling services and financial support, to temporary agency workers. It should be acknowledged that bipartite training funds need to be based on constructive social partnership and collective labour agreements and that these are strongly connected to the specific labour market context in those countries where the funds are set.
2. Engage the sector of temporary agency work in initiatives of the European Year of Skills aiming at fostering labour market matching, skills intelligence and training, as well as in the National Plans set up under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Ensure equal access to government schemes that address the impact of the pandemic.
3. Recognise that an enabling environment for labour market transitions, skills and training must be based on valuing diverse forms of work, ensuring appropriate regulation of temporary agency work and tailored labour market policies - in line with the 2021 European Commission Effective Active Support to Employment (EASE) Recommendation on effective, active support to employment.

These commitments and joint recommendations will be followed up by the World Employment Confederation-Europe and UNI-Europa throughout the European Year of Skills from 9 May 2023 to 8 May 2024 with the common objective of supporting workers in dynamic, resilient and inclusive labour markets and assisting companies in managing their economic needs in times of rising labour shortages.

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