



European
Commission

Management Plan 2021

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

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INTRODUCTION

The Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) pursues policy and legislative and financial initiatives designed to build a highly competitive social market economy in the European Union. The **European Pillar of Social Rights**¹ is the EU social strategy to ensure that the transitions to climate-neutrality, digitalisation and demographic change are socially fair and just. By implementing the Pillar, DG EMPL aims to create more and better jobs, promote skills and vocational education and training, improve the functioning of the labour markets, fight inequalities, confront poverty and social exclusion, modernise social protection systems including pensions, health and long-term care, facilitate the free movement of workers, promote workers' rights, health and safety at work, and protect against discrimination in the work place, as well as uphold the rights of persons with disabilities.

Mission statement of DG EMPL, 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

The 2021 Management Plan is the second in a series of five plans reflecting the ambitions set in the Strategic Plan for 2020-2024². It presents DG EMPL's **key outputs and activities** for the year and explains how these outputs will contribute to the attainment of its specific objectives and, consequently, to the achievement of Commission's general objectives derived from the political agenda of President von der Leyen³.

DG EMPL's **main new policy initiatives** for 2021, as defined in the Commission Work Programme⁴, focus on:



¹ [The European Pillar of Social Rights.](#)

² [Strategic Plan 2020-2024.](#)

³ [Political agenda of President von der Leyen.](#)

⁴ [2021 Commission Work Programme.](#)

2021 is a transitional year in terms of **funding**. Employment, social affairs and inclusion policies will continue to receive funding under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, while programming and funding from the 2021-2027 framework will start in parallel. Overall, DG EMPL will have around €18.5 billion available for payments in 2021 and intends to:

- ✓ Continue to implement **the 2014 - 2020 programmes** funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Fund for European Aid to most Deprived (FEAD).
 - ✓ quality and accessibility of healthcare in order to contain the spread of the virus.
- ✓ Improve social resilience in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by helping to programme instruments under the **Next Generation EU**⁵, notably the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the Just Transition Fund (JTF) and the REACT-EU.
 - ✓ Finalise the ESF+ ⁶ 2021-2027 negotiations and analyse the **partnership agreements** and draft **programmes** expected from the Member States by second quarter of 2021. Special consideration will be given to coordinating, demarcating and identifying complementarities between the different strands of the ESF+ as well as with other EU sources of finance, including the RRF and the BREXIT Adjustment Reserve.
- ✓ Ensure a swift reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic through **REACT-EU** whose investment priorities encompass all the main areas of ESF intervention: job maintenance of employees and self-employed, in particular via short-time work schemes; job creation and quality employment, with a focus on people in vulnerable situations; extend youth employment measures in line with the reinforced Youth Guarantee; invest in education, training and skills development to address the twin green and digital transitions; support social systems contributing to social inclusion, anti-discrimination and poverty eradication measures; enhance equal access to social services, including for children, elderly, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and the homeless; and promote health services for vulnerable groups and improving the
 - ✓ Subsequently, **pay pre-financings** to the Member States from ESF+ so that investment can get under way on the ground.
 - ✓ Support DG EMPL's policy priorities through the Employment and Social Innovation programme, InvestEU, Erasmus+, Prerogatives and the programme for Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values through, among others, **calls for proposals**.
 - ✓ Assess the **applications for support received** from the Member States and prepare a proposal for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Fund (EGF), if the conditions set out in the post-2020 regulation are met.

⁵ [Recovery plan for Europe](#).

⁶ Including the former ESF, YEI, FEAD and EaSI.

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year

The COVID-19 pandemic increases the risk for job losses, low living conditions and acute poverty. As the **people are the core element of the economic fabric**, the Commission took a steadfast commitment to support them in overcoming the crisis⁷.

To this end, DG EMPL's stewardship in building a stronger social Europe will thus put **solidarity at the heart of the recovery process** to ensure that no one is left behind.

In this view, the **Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights** will be the Commission's key instrument for promoting medium and long-term **socioeconomic recovery and resilience** while also making the **digital and green transitions** fairer in social terms. It will set out long term targets to reinforce the social dimension of Europe until 2030, key ongoing and planned Commission initiatives to implement the Pillar during this Commission's mandate and involve reflections on ways to monitor and incentivise reforms to implement the Pillar at EU, national, regional and local level. The aim is to have the main objectives of the Action Plan endorsed at the highest political level during the planned **Social Summit under the Portuguese Presidency in May 2021**.

The key external communication priority for 2021 is the **campaign on the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights**. It will be deployed in two phases:

- ✓ In the first phase, DG EMPL will be in close contact with the media and national authorities at the time of adoption.
- ✓ In the second phase, DG EMPL will engage stakeholders at regional and local level and national Pillar coordinators in the run-up to the Social Summit in May 2021.

As part of this campaign, DG EMPL will launch targeted communication campaigns about policy initiatives that contribute to the Action Plan, such as the European Child Guarantee, the reinforced Youth Guarantee, the Youth Employment Support package, the new Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030), the new EU Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework for 2021-2027 and the Action Plan for the Social Economy. The strategy for dissemination of Europass and the new Skills Agenda will continue in 2021. DG EMPL will also continue to contribute to corporate communication campaigns.

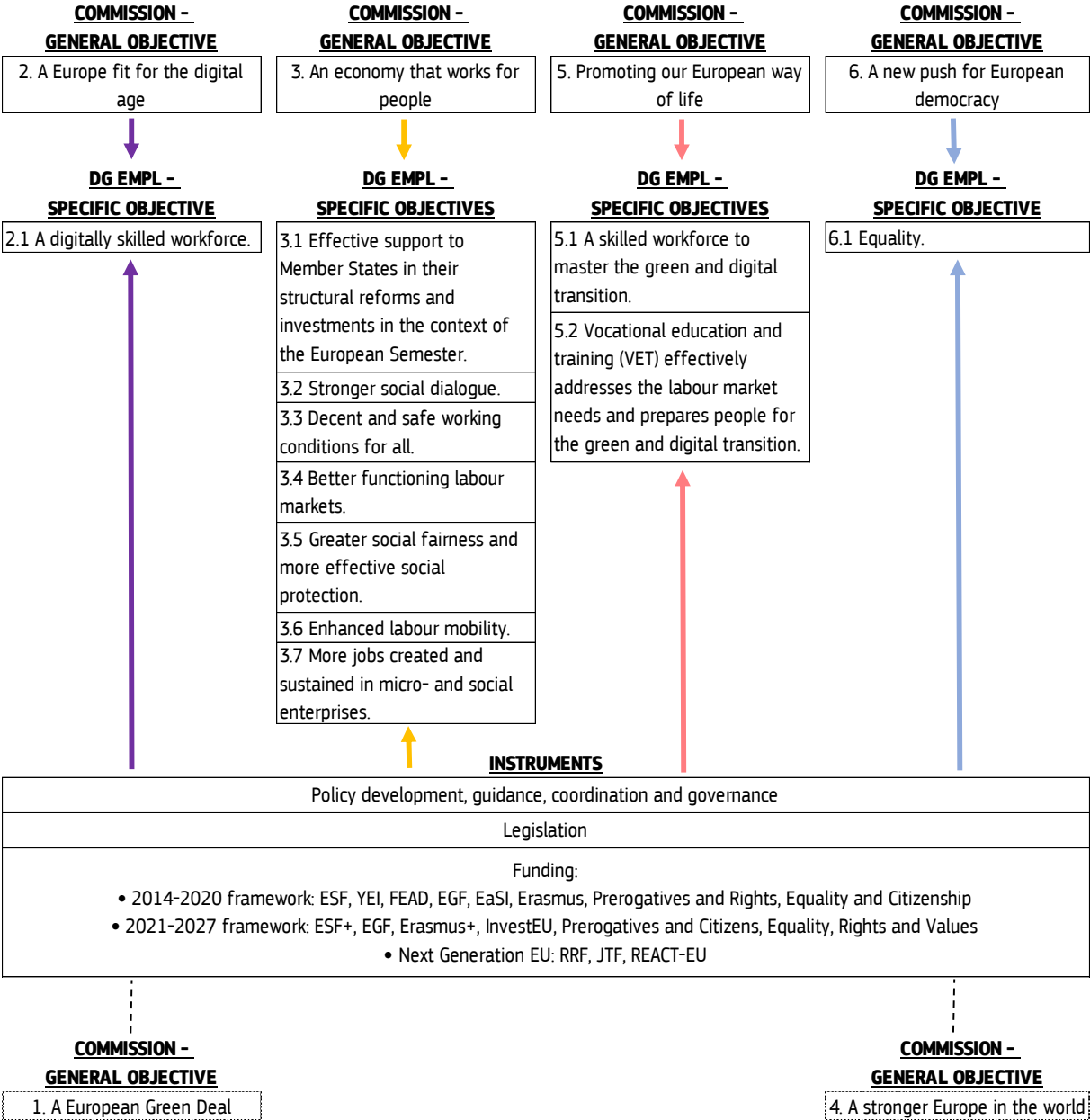
The main events of 2021 are the **Access City Award**, the **European Day of Persons with Disabilities**, the **launch event for the Europass Digitally Signed Credentials**

⁷ [The President's 2020 State of the Union address.](#)

and the **High-Level Forum on Individual Learning Accounts**. The form these events take will need to take account of the COVID-19 situation and include online alternatives.

As regards better regulation, DG EMPL will carry out several **thematic evaluations on the ESF** and a **study supporting the ex post evaluation of the EaSI programme and the final evaluation of the European Progress Microfinance Facility**. The general purpose of the study is to review and assess the results against the initial objectives, and the overall impact and EU value added in the respective and evolving contexts. Furthermore, all **major policy initiatives will be based on impact assessments** and later evaluated, as detailed under each specific objective.

Overall, DG EMPL’s 2021 actions will be tailored on the following objectives, in line with its multiannual strategy:



General objective 1: A European Green Deal

Progress to an **environmentally sustainable and socially fair economy** will bring with it new opportunities for job creation and business development. For the transition to be successful, many workers will need to adapt, learning new skills and retraining to change jobs or occupations. Policies need to help address expected job losses, facilitate labour market transitions and mitigate adverse effects on poverty.

Against this background, DG EMPL will continue to contribute indirectly to this Commission general objective in 2021 by designing just transition policies, making consistent use of all policy levers (regulation, investment, promotion of national reforms, social dialogue and international cooperation), and through activities designated to ensure that the transition takes account of employment impacts and social investment needs, is socially just and leaves nobody behind.

More specifically, DG EMPL will help prepare key sectoral initiatives to implement the **2030 Climate Target Plan**. This will include further developing analytical capacities for assessing, monitoring and evaluating employment and distributional impacts, targeted in-house analysis, and extension of the sustainable finance framework.

DG EMPL will also continue to follow up on the assessment of the **National Energy and Climate Plans**, focusing on the implementation of country-specific recommendations on the just transition and their integration into the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

It will also contribute to the **Commission's corporate communication campaigns around the Green Deal**, including the Climate Pact and initiatives to encourage green consumption. The campaigns will also follow up to the Renovation Wave and related initiatives, especially in view of job creation and skills, energy poverty and accessibility of buildings.

Finally, DG EMPL will also engage in a closer dialogue and cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on a just transition towards climate-neutrality, including cooperation within the **Climate Action for Jobs Initiative**. It will carry out research and analysis of employment and social impact of ambitious actions against climate change, as well as on best practices in integrating employment and social aspects into climate and energy policy planning tools, and their promotion in the international context.

DG EMPL's **main contribution** in 2021 will consist of:

- ✓ drawing up the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, including its contribution to a just transition;
- ✓ integrating social aspects fully into the Recovery and Resilience Facility and assessing how the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, reforms and investments contribute in practice to the just transition towards climate-neutrality;

- ✓ implementing the Just Transition Mechanism and the Just Transition Fund, and using the ESF+ to support the transition to climate-neutrality;
- ✓ checking how consistent and coherent the National Recovery and Resilience Plans are with governance, country-specific recommendations and investment priorities under the Energy Union and Climate Action governance process, the Just Transition Fund, the Modernisation Fund, etc;
- ✓ monitoring and assessing progress under the Energy Union and Climate Action governance, the 2030 Climate Target Plan and a future European Climate Law, with a focus on social investments and just transition;
- ✓ developing modelling capacity, tools and indicators, and regularly assessing the socioeconomic and distributional impacts of the transition to climate-neutrality; conducting in-house analysis and studies on employment, skills and social aspects of the transition to climate-neutrality, including: investment needs for reskilling for the transition, job quality in the green economy, aspects of the circular economy that affect health and safety at work, etc.
- ✓ contributing to the impact assessments and preparation of sectoral initiatives to implement the 2030 Climate Target Plan from the social point of view, including: revision of the Emissions Trading System, effort-sharing, energy taxation, energy efficiency legislation (notably energy poverty and accessibility of buildings), EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (including working conditions and other just resilience aspects), smart and sustainable mobility strategy, sustainable finance, etc;
- ✓ stepping up EU-ILO cooperation to advance social justice, decent work, a just transition for all and a sustainable recovery from COVID-19, based on the EU Green Deal and the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, encompassing: promotion of just transition policies, including in the context of the COVID-19 recovery, joint initiatives and cooperation within the ILO Climate Action for Jobs Initiative, joint research and analysis and integration of employment and social aspects in climate and energy policy planning tools and international cooperation in the field of just transition.

Through its actions and policy outputs, DG EMPL will contribute to the following **aspects of the Green Deal** from the employment and social viewpoint: ‘Increasing the EU’s Climate Ambition for 2050 and 2030’ and ‘Leave no one behind (Just Transition)’; ‘Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy’; ‘Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way’; ‘From Farm to Fork: a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system’; and ‘Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility’.

General objective 2: A Europe fit for the digital age

DG EMPL will contribute to this Commission general objective through its **linked specific objective**, which is designed to support the Skills Agenda⁸ as regards to digital transformation. Moreover, the **online promotion campaign for the new Europass** will continue with targeted materials such as promotional videos for use at EU level and by the network of national Europass contact points whose work programme includes communications, funded via the Erasmus+ programme.

The policy priorities that DG EMPL has set to help achieve this general objective of the Commission will benefit from **financial support** through:

- the 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, EaSI and Erasmus;
- the 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, Erasmus+ and InvestEU;
- the Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

Specific objective 2.1: A digitally skilled workforce⁹

DG EMPL's planned under this specific objective stem from Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which underlines the right to 'Education, training and life-long learning' and Principle 4 'Active support to employment'. They also support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, notably goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all', goal 9 'Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation' and goal 10 'Reduce inequality within and among countries'.

DG EMPL will deliver on this objective in 2021 through three main outputs:

- ✓ launch of Europass Digitally Signed Credentials, delivering on the Digital Education Action Plan¹⁰; this is the EU tool that provides people with proof of learning (qualifications and more) in a fraud-proof, easily shareable format; the tool will be an integral part of Europass, but can also be used on its own by any organisation that issues credentials; the credentials can be stored by individuals in their Europass ePortfolios and sent to potential employers or training providers when applying for a job or further training;
- ✓ launch of a feasibility study for a European Digital Skills Certificate, to document people's digital skills in a format comprehensible throughout the EU; work in 2021 will explore existing public and private certification schemes and explore how these can be complemented by a solution at EU level; thanks to the certificate, individuals

⁸ [European Skills Agenda](#).

⁹ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 39).

¹⁰ [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#).

- will find it easier to communicate their level of digital skills when applying for a job or further training;
- ✓ roll-out of SELFIE for work-based learning, a digital self-reflection tool for education and training providers.

In addition, DG EMPL will work on an initiative for platform workers.¹¹

These outputs support the priorities set out by President von der Leyen in her 2020 State of the Union address: 'We must make this Europe's Digital Decade. We need a common plan for digital Europe with clearly defined goals for 2030, such as connectivity, skills and digital public services'.

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

DG EMPL will contribute to this Commission general objective through its **seven linked specific objectives** and a major **external communication campaign on the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights**.

The policy priorities set by DG EMPL to help achieve this general objective of the Commission will benefit from **financial support** through:

- the 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, FEAD, EaSI, EGF and Prerogatives;
- the 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, EGF, InvestEU and Prerogatives;
- the Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

Specific objective 3.1: Effective support to Member States in their structural reforms and investments in the context of the European Semester¹²

In 2021, the annual European Semester cycle will be adjusted to the implementation of the newly established Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Under this mechanism, DG EMPL will mainstream the European Pillar of Social Rights and monitor its implementation by means including through the Social Scoreboard. It will also help integrate the UN Sustainable Development Goals further into the Semester.

Given the changed economic and social context following the COVID-19 crisis and in line with the President's 2020 State of the Union address and the 2021 Commission Work Programme, DG EMPL will contribute to the governance and implementation of the

¹¹ Detailed under Specific objective 3.4 (page 17).

¹² This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 40).

proposed Next Generation EU package and its centrepiece, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and will ensure that the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, including the green and digital transitions, have a strong social dimension. DG EMPL will help define related milestones and targets with the Member States, monitor progress towards them and assess implementation in the context of the Semester.

The key output for 2021 under this specific objective is an Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, to which President von der Leyen has committed in her political guidelines.

With its Communication on an Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights¹³, the Commission will put forward its proposal for 2030 policy targets in the social field and establish a roadmap towards that ambition. The plan will aim for a fair recovery and promote socially just transitions towards more digital and greener economies.

The Plan will include a list of specific measures at EU level designed to help make the Pillar principles a reality. Given the cross-cutting nature of the Pillar, these measures will cover initiatives under the responsibility of DG EMPL and key relevant initiatives falling within the remits of other DGs, such as the update of the Industrial Strategy or the European Education Area. The Action plan may also announce avenues for Commission initiatives to be taken between 2022 and 2024.

As part of its Action plan, the Commission will discuss updates to the governance framework and its monitoring toolbox (including a revised social scoreboard), which serve to track and incentivise progress at all levels towards implementing the Pillar and achieving the actions and objectives of the Action plan.

Other important outputs of DG EMPL under this specific objective include:

- ✓ helping establish key Semester outputs, including the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, the Alert Mechanism Report and the euro area recommendation;
- ✓ fulfilling legal obligations such as Article 148 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), notably as regards preparing a proposal for Employment Guidelines and negotiating it with the Council, drafting the Joint Employment Report, and overseeing the multilateral surveillance process together with the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs committees;
- ✓ publishing the report on the Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe, a key tool for assessing national employment reforms;
- ✓ publishing and disseminating the 2021 Annual Review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe, including a detailed analysis of regional challenges vis-à-vis the twin green and digital transitions in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹³ [Communication 'A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions'](#).

All these activities will see a stronger focus on the social fairness priority planned for the 2021 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, including special attention to analysing the social consequences of the green and digital transitions, and on the skills dimension of the recovery, in line with the Reskill and Upskill Recovery and Resilience Facility flagship component and mainstreamed across other flagships.

DG EMPL will also take part in the debate on the future of the European Semester in the different dimensions it may take. It will provide guidance, support and knowledge about employment, skills and social issues, plus an assessment of the social and distributional impact of reforms in other domains. To strengthen ownership in Member States, it will be essential to involve social partners and civil society organisations (beyond their existing level of engagement, which has already increased in recent years). The revised social scoreboard will help reinforce the monitoring of the European Pillar of Social Rights in the context of the Semester.

DG EMPL is committed to ensuring ownership of Semester deliverables among national and EU-level stakeholders by maintaining current consultation and communication practices (e.g. discussions on the main deliverables in the European Parliament; holding regular meetings with social partners and civil society organisations; missions to Member States, as far as possible under the confinement restrictions; and communication events). It is also committed to reinforcing ownership where necessary, including via strong external communication.

Enhanced communication activities at EU and national level will support the achievement of this objective. These will include more activity on social networks, organising events with key stakeholders and stepping up dialogue with national authorities.

In addition, DG EMPL will support multilateral surveillance and country peer-reviews in the relevant forums (the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee, with its subgroups), and mutual learning programmes where good practices are exchanged among Member States.

Specific objective 3.2: Stronger social dialogue¹⁴

Social dialogue is deeply embedded in the European Pillar of Social Rights (principle 8 'Social dialogue and involvement of workers') and contributes to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal 1 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere', goal 5 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', goal 10 'Reduce inequality within and among countries' and goal 16 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'.

¹⁴ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 40).

Given its role as a tool for negotiation and consensus building among the tripartite actors from the world of work (governments, workers' and employers' organisations), social dialogue is high on the Commission agenda. In her political guidelines, President von der Leyen stressed her commitment to social dialogue ('I am a firm believer in the value of social dialogue between employers and unions'). She reiterated this commitment in her 2020 State of the Union address, in which she underlined that she is 'a strong advocate of collective bargaining'.

The President's commitment was translated in the Communication on A stronger Social Europe for just transitions, adopted on 14 January 2020, in which the Commission pledges to explore further ways to step up social dialogue and collective bargaining and increase the capacity of union and employer organisations at EU and national level.

From this perspective, DG EMPL will focus its activities in 2021 on:

- ✓ strengthening the involvement of social partners in EU policy and law-making across social and employment policy and other relevant policy areas, through the obligatory social partner consultations based on Article 154 of the TFEU and other forms of consultations (e.g. meetings at a high political level, dedicated hearings at service level, and consultations through the existing 44 cross-industry and sectoral Social Dialogue Committees);
- ✓ supporting EU-level social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral level by facilitating the development of bipartite products (including via the support to Social Dialogue Committee meetings), seeking further synergies in the work carried out by the sectoral social partners and providing financial support as part of calls for proposals. The Tripartite Social Summits, held once for each rotating Council presidency, will constitute important milestones;
- ✓ following and implementing the new actions to be announced in the upcoming Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, such as the possible review of sectoral social dialogue with a view to improving its functioning and effectiveness stemming from new challenges;
- ✓ contributing to strengthening social dialogue at national level by analysing progress on country-specific recommendations in the European Semester.
- ✓ helping strengthen attention to the functioning and effectiveness of industrial relations by contributing to the annual Employment and Social Developments in Europe Annual Review, supervising Eurofound's activities and participating in the Governing Board, Bureau and Advisory Committees, and by promoting the involvement of social partners in international forums (ILO, G20) and external relations (notably enlargement, neighbourhood and linkage between trade and working conditions abroad).

Social dialogue is backed by the prerogatives budget lines, which provide funding to support negotiations, common projects, and the exchange of information and good practice between social partner organisations at EU or transnational level. The prerogatives also fund capacity-building measures for workers' and employers' organisations and provide

financial support for analysis of industrial relations and studies. For 2021, further dedicated financial support for social partners affected by the COVID-19 crisis is envisaged under these budget lines. Social dialogue is also supported by the ESF and ESF+, as Member States can use the European Structural and Investment Funds to strengthen the capacity-building of social partners.

Specific objective 3.3: Decent and safe working conditions for all¹⁵

The outputs planned by DG EMPL under this specific objective derive from the European Pillar of Social Rights, namely from the principles related to fair working conditions (5-10). They also support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal 3 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' and goal 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

A. Decent working conditions for all

At the beginning of her mandate, President von der Leyen committed in her political guidelines to presenting a legal instrument to ensure that workers in the EU are protected by adequate minimum wages. She reiterated her commitment in her 2020 State of the Union address.

The Commission will focus in 2021 on seeking to facilitate an agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on the proposed Directive COM(2020)682 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union (from 28 October 2020), to enable workers in the Union to benefit from this initiative. The proposed Directive is designed to support collective bargaining on wages, ensuring that statutory minimum wages are set at adequate levels and strengthening the enforcement and monitoring of minimum wage protection. It fully respects the specific characteristics of national systems, national competences and the autonomy of social partners.

Furthermore, following some delays due to COVID-19, the expert group on the transposition of Directive 1152/2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions will hold the most of its meetings in 2021, reviewing in detail each of the provisions of the Directive and discussing the issues that Member States face in transposing them into national legislation. The group will help establish an effective and consistent approach to implementing the Directive.

DG EMPL will also continue to update the information on national legislation and European and national jurisprudence on labour law through the reports of the European Labour Law

¹⁵ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 41).

Expert Network and through updates of the working time webpage and the specialist sub-group of the Directors-General for Industrial Relations.

B. Safe working conditions for all

The key output for 2021, as planned in the Commission Work Programme, is the Communication on a new EU Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework for 2021-2027.

The initiative will help improve the health and safety of workers across the EU by reducing accidents at work and work-related diseases, and mobilise Member States and stakeholders around common priorities to achieve this aim. These priorities will take account of the new circumstances and the need to prepare for new crises and threats.

The new Strategic Framework will be built on past years' achievements and reflect the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic as regards the health and safety of workers. It will address emerging risks together with traditional ones and mobilise Member States and stakeholders around common priorities to reduce accidents at work and work-related diseases even further.

An external study is under way to take stock of the Strategic Framework for 2014-2020 and support the new Framework, together with the inputs received from the main stakeholders in this policy area, such as the opinion of the tripartite Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work, the opinion of the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee, and the Council Conclusions during the Romanian, Finnish, and Croatian Presidencies.

Feedback will be gathered on initial ideas through a roadmap and launching a public consultation to gather views both on the previous and the future strategic framework.

An interservice group will be set up to accompany the development of the initiative.

As regards better regulation, DG EMPL will conduct impact assessments on:

- ✓ Revising the existing occupational exposure limit values under the Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work.
- ✓ Setting or revising limit values for lead and di-isocyanates under the Directive 98/24/EC on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work.

The consultation of social partners required under Article 154 of the TFEU (the first-stage consultation was launched at the end of 2020) will, together with the deliberations of the Tripartite Advisory Committee on Occupational Health and Safety, feed into the impact assessments. Subject to a positive opinion from the social partners and the findings of the impact assessment, the adoption of both proposals might take place in 2022.

The external communication activities will focus on the new EU Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework, which is particularly important in the context of the new circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. This could include specific messages on the EU-OSH agency site, a comprehensive press package and other individual measures designed to reach a broad external audience and show how Europe supports healthy and safe workplaces. DG EMPL will also support EU-OSH agency in organising an EU OSH information system conference in July 2021 where the OSH Barometer and the analytical report ‘State of Occupational Safety and Health in the EU’ will be presented and discussed among high level representatives from the Commission, Member States and social partners. The activities will also include mobilising stakeholders around the objectives of the Framework.

DG EMPL will also provide information on the proposal for a Directive on adequate minimum wages as part of the communication activities planned for the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Specific objective 3.4: Better functioning labour markets¹⁶

In 2021, DG EMPL will contribute to the better functioning of labour markets with the aim to make them more dynamic, inclusive and resilient, supporting recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis and building on the opportunities provided by the digital and green transitions.

The Employment Committee will continue to play a central role in promoting effective labour market policies through targeted thematic reviews and via multilateral monitoring.

The outputs planned for 2021 under this specific objective will support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, namely principle 4 ‘Active support to employment’, the principles related to fair working conditions (5-10) and principle 13 ‘Unemployment benefits’. They will also contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to goal 8 ‘Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’ and goal 10 ‘Reduce inequality within and among countries’.

In the light of the unfolding pandemic, which is speeding up changes in the world of work, DG EMPL will continue to follow and play an active part in the debate on the future of work with its challenges and potential impacts on the European labour market.

Platform work is a particular new form of work enabled by digital transformation. It creates new job opportunities and lowers entry barriers to the labour market, but at the same time raises concerns about matters such as the fairness of the working conditions and access to adequate social protection. Given its importance in the current work environment, DG

¹⁶ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 42).

EMPL's key output for 2021 in this area is to improve working conditions for platform workers, to ensure conditions are dignified, transparent and predictable.

For this purpose, a formal two-stage consultation of the social partners may be launched under Article 154 of the TFEU in the first quarter of 2021 to seek the views of social partners on the need for EU action and the direction any such action should take, and whether they wish to engage in formal negotiations. In case they decide not to engage in formal negotiations, a proposal for action and an impact assessment will be prepared if a legislative option is considered. In such scenario, the initiative on platform work is expected to be adopted at the end of 2021, as announced by President von der Leyen in her letter of intent to the European Parliament regarding the 2021 Commission Work Programme.

The digital transformation has intensified during the COVID-19 crisis. Recent evidence¹⁷ suggests that a substantial number of occupations are likely to be affected by automation and are at risk. To tackle the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and robotisation, DG EMPL will continue to take part in discussions on their impact on the world of work, in particular by contributing to the legislative instrument on artificial intelligence expected in early 2021.

The COVID-19 crisis has also shed light on the pros and cons of existing work arrangements and how appropriate they are in a digital age. In the context of a surge in telework as experienced during the confinement periods and during its aftermath, political support for 'new' digital rights is growing. The European Parliament is set to adopt its own legislative initiative report on the 'right to disconnect' at the beginning of 2021. DG EMPL will examine the report and analyse the issue further to follow up President von der Leyen's commitment to respond to any European Parliament resolution calling on the Commission to submit legislative proposals.

Special attention will be devoted to the young people as to avert a new youth employment crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Outputs will comprise active support for the implementation of the reinforced Youth Guarantee, as well as follow up actions announced in the 2020 Commission Communication on Youth Employment Support. The latter refers to future actions of the European Network of Public Employment Services, specific support for networks of aspiring young entrepreneurs, the Action Plan for the Social Economy, measures to improve the working conditions associated with digital platforms, the Monitoring Framework on Access to Social Protection and a study on young people's access to social protection. Finally, in the context of traineeships, DG EMPL will explore possible ways forward in support of stakeholders' advocacy for the curtailment of inadequately paid or unpaid working arrangements.

In 2021, DG EMPL will continue to contribute to the implementation of the European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency. Out of

¹⁷ [Discussion Paper 'The future of work in Europe', McKinsey Global Institute, 10 June 2020.](#)

a maximum lending capacity of €100 billion, about €9.7 billion are still available to provide further support to Member States in their efforts to protect employees and the self-employed against the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. DG EMPL will also contribute to the drafting of two implementation reports that the Commission is required to present to the European Parliament, the Economic and Financial Committee and the Employment Committee every six months.

As part of the recovery, the EU employment policy will continue to guide the Member States' employment policies and reforms. DG EMPL will consider stronger employment recovery policies to provide a relay from short-time working and other job retention schemes to ensure that efficient crisis tools do not impede a reallocation of labour. To help drive the recovery, such employment policies will aim to help workers who are at risk or have fallen in unemployment to successfully find new jobs and occupations.

In 2021, active labour market policies will continue to be followed closely, given their central role in tackling the employment-related and social consequences of the pandemic. Special attention will be given to vulnerable groups, especially to the long-term unemployed, who are expected to be particularly affected. Strengthening the integrated services will also support unemployed people and, in particular, the group of long-term unemployed.

DG EMPL will also continue to support the capacities and performance of Public Employment Services. It will engage in benchlearning activities and mutual assistance programmes, with particular emphasis on the role of Public Employment Services in the recovery process. It will address the new priorities defined in the amended Decision 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services, which was adopted on 25 November 2020 and extended the period of establishment of the Public Employment Services Network to 31 December 2027. The new priorities include contributing to the implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Green Deal, challenges associated with the new world of work, preventing unemployment and promoting the employability of jobseekers.

Specific objective 3.5: Greater social fairness and more effective social protection¹⁸

DG EMPL will continue to promote social fairness and help address the social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic through the implementation of the principles related to social protection and inclusion (11-20) from the European Pillar of Social Rights. Through its initiatives in this area, it will also contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to goal 1 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere', goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and

¹⁸ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 42).

equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all', goal 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all', goal 10 'Reduce inequality within and among countries', goal 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' and goal 17 'Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development'.

To detail, DG EMPL will follow up on the political guidelines of President von der Leyen on social protection and inclusion and, following the adoption of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, it will start taking relevant action in these areas, in particular:

- ✓ The adoption of a European Child Guarantee, planned for the first quarter of 2021 in the Commission Work Programme. This initiative is both important and urgent, as statistics show that close to one child in four in the EU is at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Poverty and deprivation in childhood have both short- and long-term effects (harming physical and cognitive development) and lead to an intergenerational cycle of disadvantages. The European Child Guarantee will ensure that children have access to the services they need and are supported until they reach adulthood.
- ✓ The launch of a stronger cooperation platform in the area of homelessness among all parties involved, including the homeless, NGOs, cities and institutions; the objective is to help Member States adopt best practices to combat housing exclusion; this initiative will be complemented by other actions, such as the development of a housing toolkit to analyse challenges, measures and ways to monitor progress.
- ✓ Contribute to the Green Paper on Ageing and launch a wide-ranging debate on the impacts of population ageing on care, active ageing and social protection systems.
- ✓ Continue to implement the Recommendation on access to social protection by means including the use and further development of a monitoring framework and the analysis of national plans to be submitted by Member States in May 2021. The Recommendation is designed to address the gaps in social protection affecting workers in non-standard forms of employment and for the self-employed.
- ✓ Launch a study to analyse gaps in social safety nets to follow up on the Council Conclusions on strengthening minimum income protection to combat poverty and social exclusion in the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, which call for updating the EU framework on minimum income.
- ✓ Explore options for an initiative on long-term care and map out its potential scope; the initiative could set out a framework for long-term care policy reforms to help Member States address the common challenges of access to long-term care, ensuring that it meets certain quality standards, the availability of an adequate labour force and supporting informal carers, while safeguarding sustainability.
- ✓ Provide support for better use of the distributional impact assessment and exploring a possible initiative in this area.

- ✓ Contribute to the implementation of the EU Roma strategic framework through the implementation of the ROMACT capacity building programme for Roma inclusion, the BIG pilot project on E-pay cards for marginalised people to promote more effective access to welfare benefits for people in extreme poverty such as marginalised Roma, and the HERO pilot project on housing and empowerment for marginalised families, in particular Roma families.
- ✓ Support the Social Protection Committee in coordination and mutual learning activities. In this context, DG EMPL will provide proposals to the Indicators Sub-Group related to the development of indicators on inequality of opportunity and on long-term care, social protection performance monitoring, benchmarking on childcare and support for children, and on pension adequacy. Moreover, DG EMPL will continue the joint work with the Committee working groups on pensions and long-term care with a view to the finalisation and adoption of the next edition of the Pension Adequacy Report and of the Long-term Care Report, planned for mid-2021. The Long-Term Care Report will analyse key common challenges in the area of access and affordability, quality, workforce, financing and sustainability, complemented by information on recent reforms in Member States and country fiches, and outlining the situation on long-term care in each Member State. The Report will thus provide a state of play of 'long-term care preparedness' across the EU and will serve as a basis for policy dialogue with Member States. The triennial Pension Adequacy Report will analyse how pension systems support the income of older people and protect pensioners against poverty today and in the future. The 2021 edition will focus in particular on how risks and resources are shared between men and women, between people with different income levels and careers, and between people in different types of jobs. Furthermore, the DG will support the follow up of the Energy Poverty Commission Recommendation, namely by backing the Member States' monitoring in the Social Protection Committee.
- ✓ Promote and engage in a continued dialogue with the civil society possibly through the Annual Convention on Inclusive Growth, the Conference on People Experiencing Poverty, and approximately 10 strategic dialogue meetings on specific thematic issues. A new call for proposals for supporting EU-level networks of organisations active in the fields of poverty and social exclusion will be launched.
- ✓ Support innovation and experimentation in the area of social protection and inclusion policies through implementation of EaSI projects. In this context, DG EMPL will assess proposals for innovative projects to support the principle 14 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which refers to minimum income.
- ✓ Contribute to implementing the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion of migrants, with a particular emphasis on increasing migrants' participation in the labour market, boosting their skills and supporting their social inclusion.

External communication on the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Green Paper on Ageing will also include information about social protection and social inclusion.

Specific objective 3.6: Enhanced labour mobility¹⁹

The COVID-19 pandemic, with the closure of the internal borders of the EU, has shown once again that many mobile workers perform functions that are essential to the EU economy but face challenging working conditions. DG EMPL will contribute to the implementation of the principles on fair working conditions (5-10) from the European Pillar of Social Rights and of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goal 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

In 2021, DG EMPL will focus on:

- ✓ finalising the transfer of activities to the newly established European Labour Authority, which will start its supervision in mid-2021; this concerns mainly the activities of the EURES European coordination office and the platform tackling undeclared work;
- ✓ supporting the European Parliament and the Council in finding an agreement on the revised rules for social security coordination;
- ✓ increasing the support for the Member States' enforcement activities, notably by improving the knowledge sharing and implementation of the rules through specific committees and expert networks on issues such as social security coordination rules;
- ✓ stepping up communication activities on the benefits of intra-EU labour mobility, at all levels.

The rules on social security coordination need to be regularly updated to take account of new developments in the Member States and to ensure that they remain fair and efficient. A key milestone in 2021 is to conclude the ongoing negotiations and start implementing the new rules for which the revised social security coordination regulations provide. The revision in progress is based on a thorough impact assessment and studies, and contains articles on conducting evaluations for some of the relevant new rules. The revised regulations might generate delegated and implementing acts to ensure that the new rules are correctly implemented.

DG EMPL will also continue its efforts to ensure that the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) becomes fully operational in the coming year(s). This means ensuring that all 32 participating countries complete the full national implementation and are thus able to exchange all relevant business cases and documents. DG EMPL will also continue to reflect on developing a European identification and verification system for the social security coverage of mobile citizens.

¹⁹ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 43).

In accordance with Article 35 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, the Commission will submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions an ex post evaluation report on the operation and effects of this regulation by 13 May 2021. In this context, DG EMPL will consult other Commission services in the first quarter of 2021.

As these rules directly affect millions of citizens (for instance, 250 million people have a European Health Insurance Card), DG EMPL will use a variety of tools (studies, reports, seminars, Q&A sessions, databases, websites, animations, videos, etc.) to ensure that the rules and their implications are adequately communicated to the public and the responsible authorities.

DG EMPL will also run targeted campaigns to promote the benefits of labour mobility and highlight the results of the existing tools in this area. The actions will include social media and recurrent campaigns similar to the recent ones in the area of labour mobility (e.g. 50 years of freedom of movement of workers, #EURES25, #EU4fairwork).

The Commission will cooperate with the European Labour Authority, the EURES network, the Member States and interested stakeholders to put forward a campaign targeting sectors more reliant on seasonal work. Coordinated by the European Labour Authority, the campaign is planned for the third quarter of 2021 and will focus on informing workers and employers about their rights and obligations and the proper application of EU rules in relation to seasonal workers.

Specific objective 3.7: More jobs created and sustained in micro- and social enterprises²⁰

The outputs planned by DG EMPL for 2021 under this specific objective will support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goal 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all' and goal 10 'Reduce inequality within and among countries'.

The political guidelines of President von der Leyen place the social market economy at the heart of the green and digital transitions, stating that 'Europe must lead the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world. But it can only do so by bringing people together and upgrading our unique social market economy to fit today's new ambitions'.

²⁰ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 43).

In this context, the main output for the year is an Action Plan for the Social Economy, scheduled for the last quarter of 2021 according to the Commission Work Programme. This Action Plan will propose a series of measures to improve the enabling environment for the social economy across Europe so that it can generate more jobs, sustainable growth, local development and social inclusion. The European Social Economy Summit will be co-organised with DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Mannheim on 26-27 May 2021 and will support the preparations for the Action Plan.

The Action Plan will be underpinned by a strong evidence base, including an extensive study on the impact of the European Commission's Social Business Initiative and its follow up actions. The preparations will be accompanied by a wide stakeholder consultation, including through monthly webinars.

External communication actions will be launched after the publication of the Action Plan.

Social enterprises and the social economy foster sustainable jobs and growth and local development by supporting the green transition through:

- ✓ promotion of circular economy and renewable energies;
- ✓ creating job opportunities through collective entrepreneurship and through the work and social integration of disadvantaged people;
- ✓ promoting democratic values through inclusive governance models, and
- ✓ providing new channels for civic participation.

In 2021, new financial instruments will be established under the InvestEU fund, building on the success of the 2014-2020 instruments. The purpose of these new instruments is to improve access to finance for micro- and social enterprises, helping them start and expand their businesses and thereby creating and sustaining jobs (by means including self-employment), generating a positive social impact, and supporting social and inclusive entrepreneurship.

The EaSI technical assistance contracts for microfinance and social enterprise finance provide for communication with stakeholders. Outreach and external communication activities will also be pursued by the European Investment Bank Group (the main implementing partner of the continuing EaSI programme and future InvestEU Social investment and skills window) under its mandate to promote EU-level instruments for microfinance and social enterprises.

In addition, a new call for proposals will be launched to support European networks active in microfinance and social enterprise finance to raise awareness of EU-level instruments and policy support.

General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world

DG EMPL will contribute indirectly to the Commission's objectives of strengthening further the EU's unique brand of responsible global leadership, and supporting multilateralism and decent work worldwide. These constitute an external policy priority, as stated in the political guidelines of President von der Leyen.

Strengthening decent work in global supply chains will be a key priority for 2021, including through follow up on the Commission Staff Working Document, published in October 2020. To this end, DG EMPL will continue to promote the decent work agenda in the EU's external actions, multilateral forums and other EU policy areas with outreach beyond the EU, and in global partnerships, including through trade arrangements as well as development, enlargement and human rights policies. Moreover, steps will be taken towards updating the 2006 Communication on decent work for all²¹. DG EMPL will also follow closely the upcoming legislative initiative on due diligence, in which labour rights will play a central role.

A related key priority will be contributing to the Commission's **zero-tolerance policy on child labour** in cooperation with other relevant Commission services. For this purpose, DG EMPL will, for instance, continue to promote the relevant ILO Conventions and ensure that the elimination of child labour is better mainstreamed into all relevant EU policies and instruments.

Moreover, DG EMPL will continue to **promote labour rights within the Union's trade relations**, against the backdrop of the prospective trade policy review. In this context, DG EMPL will contribute to the ongoing negotiations on free trade agreements (with Australia and New Zealand, for instance) to include commitments on fundamental rights at work, occupational safety and health, labour inspections, access to remedy and provisions on decent working conditions.

DG EMPL will also continue its efforts to **implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, acting as a focal point for the Convention. It will lead the mainstreaming of disability in relevant policies and will coordinate its implementation across the Commission. It also represents the EU in UN Forums in matters related to EU competences²².

DG EMPL will also monitor the effective implementation of labour commitments in existing free trade agreements and under the Everything But Arms scheme.

²¹ Communication 'Promoting decent work for all - The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world'.

²² More information are available in specific objective 6.1 'Equality' [on page 31](#).

Ensuring a **firm anchoring of social and labour objectives** will also guide DG EMPL's engagement as regards the post-Cotonou agreement with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and in the Comprehensive Strategy for Africa.

DG EMPL will continue to support the social and economic reforms in the **Western Balkans** through the Economic Reform Programmes, but also by incentivising application of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights in the countries concerned, strengthening regional cooperation in partnership with the ILO and the regional Cooperation Council, and the roll-out of the EU acquis.

In parallel, DG EMPL will take further steps to improve the employment and social dimension in the new **EU Eastern Partnership post-2020** and continue its engagement with the Labour and Employment Ministries of the countries belonging to the **Union for the Mediterranean**.

Engagement within the ILO, the OECD, the UN, the G7/G20 and with bilateral partners on the **future of work and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals** will remain a core priority for DG EMPL in 2021. This will be particularly important in the context of attempting to remedy the damage caused by COVID-19 to labour markets, working conditions and livelihoods worldwide.

Following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and the end of the transition period in 2020, DG EMPL will **continue to monitor the implementation and enforcement of Part II of the Withdrawal Agreement on citizens' rights**, and will contribute to the Commission's efforts as regards the future relationship.

General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life

DG EMPL will contribute to this Commission general objective through its **two linked specific objectives** and through **communication campaigns designed to raise the profile of the Skills Agenda and the associated actions**, especially during the **European Vocational Skills Week** and the **High-Level Forum on Individual Learning Accounts**.

The policy priorities pursued by DG EMPL in support of this general objective of the Commission will receive **financial support** through:

- the 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, EaSI and Erasmus;
- the 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, InvestEU and Erasmus;
- the Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

Specific objective 5.1: A skilled workforce to master the green and digital transition²³

The updated Skills Agenda for Europe announced 12 flagship actions designed to deliver on the priorities of DG EMPL and the Commission as a whole, supporting upskilling and reskilling for all and setting four quantified objectives to drive progress and support monitoring. These will boost the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, namely principle 1 ‘Education, training and life-long learning’ and principle 4 ‘Active support to employment’. The flagship actions will also contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 4 ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all’, goal 9 ‘Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation’ and goal 10 ‘Reduce inequality within and among countries’.

Following the priorities set out in President von der Leyen’s political guidelines, which state that ‘the best investment in our future is the investment in our people’, many of the 12 actions making up the Skills Agenda will help equip the labour force with the skills needed for the green and digital transitions, chief among them:

- ✓ a proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials, a joint initiative with DG Education and Culture, scheduled for the last quarter of 2021 according to the Commission Work Programme; this initiative will support the upskilling and reskilling of the labour force by making it easier to prove and communicate the outcomes of short learning experiences and to use these for work or further training across the EU;
- ✓ a proposal for an initiative on individual learning accounts scheduled for the last quarter of 2021 according to Commission Work Programme; this initiative will make it easier for adults in the labour market to build the skills they need, especially with a view to preparing for the green and digital transitions;

The initiatives will be developed in accordance with better regulation principles, with a focus on EU added value and clear monitoring parameters, linked to the European Semester and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

During 2021, an impact assessment will be carried out for the initiative on individual learning accounts. A High-Level Forum on Individual Learning Accounts will be organised, in addition to broad consultations with Member States, social partners and all relevant stakeholders, including through a public consultation.

The initiative on the European approach for micro-credentials will benefit from in-depth analysis and consultation, including by an independent expert group which was set up to advise on this topic.

²³ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 44).

Under the Pact for Skills, which will continue to be implemented in 2021, individual companies, local or regional coalitions and large-scale multi-stakeholder partnerships in industrial ecosystems will support upskilling and reskilling of people of working age. This will boost efforts to ensure that everyone has the right skills to master the twin transitions.

The dedicated Skills Agenda action on skills to support the twin transitions will define a taxonomy of skills for the green transition and a core green skills set for the labour market.

In 2021, DG EMPL will also continue to work on skills intelligence and national skills strategies, an area dealt with in the Skills Agenda.

The right skills are also preconditions for success under several other 2021 Commission Work Programme initiatives undertaken by other DGs, such as:

- ✓ the roll-out of the Renovation Wave to implement the ambition of the new 2030 climate target; in this area, heating technicians and house builders will need to upgrade their skills to be able to use new technologies and products (Skills Agenda Action 6: Skills to support the twin transitions will help support the acquisition of green skills), and to make buildings more accessible;
- ✓ the update of the new industrial strategy for Europe, which calls for people with the right skills and partnerships to deliver on the ground (Skills Agenda Action 1: A Pact for Skills will include public-private commitments, starting with the industrial ecosystems identified in the Industry Strategy);
- ✓ the initiative on sustainable corporate governance that will benefit from DG EMPL's work on increasing the transparency of investment in skills for both public and private actors, including by exploring how skills can be classified as an investment in company reporting (Skills Agenda Action 12: Improving the enabling framework to unlock Member States' and private investments in skills).

In 2021, DG EMPL will conduct an evaluation of the Council Recommendation for a European Qualifications Framework with the results expected to lead to a Commission Report in 2022.

DG EMPL will also start the evaluation of the Council's Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways, the aim of which is to raise the skills and competences of low-qualified adults, as set out in the text of the Recommendation. The results are expected to be published in 2022.

External communication activities will focus on the Skills Agenda, including on its links with the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, and on other individual actions with the potential to show an external audience how Europe invests in people and their skills. Examples include press conferences or press releases at the launch of key initiatives such as the proposal on micro-credentials and the one on individual learning accounts.

Specific objective 5.2: Vocational education and training effectively addresses the labour market needs and prepares people for the green and digital transition²⁴

As a follow up on the Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training adopted on 24 November 2020, the outputs planned for 2021 will support national reforms in this area. They will back the implementation of the updated Skills Agenda and the European Pillar of Social Rights, specifically principle 1 ‘Education, training and life-long learning’, 4 ‘Active support to employment’ and 5 ‘Secure and adaptable employment’. In addition, the planned outputs will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal 4 ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all’, goal 9 ‘Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation’, goal 10 ‘Reduce inequality within and among countries’ and goal 12 ‘Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns’.

The main outputs for the year include:

- ✓ continuing to provide support for structural reforms on apprenticeships through the apprenticeship support service and fostering a new boost to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships;
- ✓ gradually establishing and developing European Platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence;
- ✓ preparing peer reviews on quality assurance in vocational education and training at system level;
- ✓ exploring European Vocational Core Profiles to define a given share of a common training content at European level, with a view to supporting excellence and internationalising vocational education and training;
- ✓ supporting qualitative and effective digitalisation of vocational education and training provision in both school-based and work-based learning by promoting the use of the SELFIE tool;
- ✓ ensuring qualitative and quantitative monitoring, in line with the common objectives defined in the Recommendation and with other relevant data, including data on investment, and feeding this data into the European Semester and relevant European monitoring and reporting frameworks.

Progress on implementing the Recommendation will be monitored with the assistance of Cedefop and the data will feed into the European Semester and other relevant monitoring frameworks (notably the Joint Employment Report and the Education and Training Monitor).

In 2021, the Commission will also report on the implementation of the 2018 Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.

²⁴ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 46).

The major communication event of the year will be the European Vocational Skills Week which attracts large numbers of people and organisations from within and beyond the EU every year. In 2021, the Commission will promote national, regional and local events throughout the EU, the aim being to increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training by promoting the value of the professions and qualifications concerned. The event will also include a centrally managed conference focusing on vocational education and training actions included in the Skills Agenda (e.g. vocational education and training priorities, the Pact for Skills, and Upskilling and Reskilling), awards and ambassadors.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

DG EMPL will contribute to this Commission general objective through its **linked specific objective** and **communication actions on the rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and work-life balance**.

The policy priorities pursued by DG EMPL to support the achievement of this general objective of the Commission will receive **financial support** through:

- the 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF and Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme;
- the 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+ and Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Value programme;
- the Next Generation EU: REACT-EU and RRF.

Specific objective 6.1: Equality²⁵

In 2021, DG EMPL will continue to promote equality for all and in all its senses through the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, namely principle 2 'Gender equality', 3 'Equal opportunities' and 17 'Inclusion of people with disabilities'. The outputs planned for 2021 will also contribute to the UN Sustainable Goals, particularly to goal 5 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' and goal 10 'Reduce inequalities within and among countries'.

The main outputs for the year will:

- ✓ Pursue the economic and social inclusion of people with disabilities through a new Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2021-2030. The new strategy, scheduled for the first quarter of 2021 according to the Commission Work Programme, will build on the results of the evaluation of the European Disability Strategy for 2010-2020. Its objective is to ensure the social and economic inclusion/participation of people with disabilities, freedom from discrimination and

²⁵ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 47).

full respect for their rights in the EU; this is to be achieved through implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and consolidation of the EU acquis.

- ✓ Contribute to the mainstreaming of disability and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relevant 2021 Commission Work Programme initiatives undertaken by other DGs, in cooperation with Task Force for Equality and its Secretariat.
- ✓ Support the implementation of all Equality Strategies, such as the EU Anti-racism Action Plan, by means including mainstreaming equality considerations in initiatives led by DG EMPL.
- ✓ Monitor the application of Directive 2000/78/EC on establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. DG EMPL and DG Justice will draw up a report on the application of this directive and of the Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.
- ✓ Follow up to the Recommendation of the High-Level Group on Pensions²⁶, explore options for promoting more equal accrual of pension rights by men and women through pension credits for care-related career breaks (notably through a study mapping their current use in occupational pension schemes).

In 2021, DG EMPL will also prepare the transposition of Directive 2019/882 on the accessibility requirements of products and services by holding meetings with national experts and providing support to Member States.

In terms of external communication, DG EMPL will organise awareness-raising actions on the living conditions of people with disabilities, the challenges they encounter in everyday life, and tools to remove barriers to their participation in society and economy on an equal footing with others. In particular, the DG will organise campaigns on the new disability strategy for 2021-2030, the 12th edition of the Access City Award and the conference for the European Day of Persons with Disabilities. It will also encourage the sharing of best practices in accessibility by supporting the organisation of an event of the Access City Award Network that bring together participants from winning cities.

Through its communication activities, DG EMPL will also support the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy which will be part of wider communication actions within the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights.

²⁶ [Final Report of the High-Level Group on Pensions](#).

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

In addition to the six general objectives to which DG EMPL will be contributing in 2021 (as presented in part 1), the DG also aims to adapt its internal procedures and processes with a view to achieving a **more 'modern, high-performing and sustainable'** institution, which constitutes the seventh general objective of the von der Leyen Commission.

The main activities DG EMPL has planned for 2021 in this context are designed to increase efficiency in the DG through measures related to human resources management, sound financial management, fraud risk management, digital transformation and information management, as well as sound environmental management.

The **internal control framework**²⁷ supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

DG EMPL has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of the service's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

A. Human resource management²⁸

In 2021, DG EMPL will continue delivering on a number of high-priority files in the context of severe constraints on human resources. To **align resources** to the new Commission priorities and core business, and to improve the efficiency of the DG, a **reorganisation** was planned for 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed this task, which is now scheduled for 2021.

The careful **screening of all vacant posts**, followed by redeployment where appropriate, will continue throughout 2021. In addition to the HR metrics reports designed to help Directors to manage their staff, the switch to the full use of ATLAS is expected to provide another tool to support management decisions on staff allocations.

To **ensure a competent and engaged workforce**, there will continue to be a rich variety of internal learning activities on offer. Most of these will probably be online, including the European Semester training series and numerous other training courses and info sessions.

In view of the key role played by managers in keeping staff engaged at a high level, particular attention will be paid to **improving people management skills**, through further

²⁷ [Communication 'Revision of the Internal Control Framework'](#)

²⁸ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 47).

training and coaching. This will include particular training sessions on the new ways of working.

To **facilitate mobility** within the DG and contribute to the retention policy, the systematic publication of DG EMPL's vacant posts on the intranet will continue, as well as personalised advice on job opportunities within the DG, provided at the request of individual staff.

With 54% female representation in middle management and 63% in senior management, DG EMPL is far above the Commission average and largely surpasses the 50% target, thus contributing substantially to **gender equality at all levels of management**. In this spirit, women with management potential will continue to be identified and encouraged to develop their management skills. The identified Deputies to Director will also be encouraged to take part in centrally organised development training.

DG EMPL will continue to work towards achieving a truly **diverse and inclusive organisation**, including through a local **equality** work programme and by making its premises more accessible.

Effective **internal communication** is vitally important in supporting the achievement of all the objectives described above. DG EMPL's intranet, which has an 'HR Corner' and a 'Focus On' section, remains a crucial tool in this context. The Staff Forums held after meetings of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will continue to debrief staff on the main political conclusions with an impact on their work, placing DG EMPL's efforts and achievements in a broader Commission context.

B. Sound financial management²⁹

In 2021, DG EMPL will move to the corporate **e-grants** system for its directly managed programmes under the new MFF. In parallel, it will adapt its internal **forecasting and planning tool** deployed in 2020 to the need and timing of the e-Grant system, to continue monitoring the progress of calls for proposals from the preparation phase to the contracting phase.

It will start implementing **simplified cost options** for new types of grants, namely, for presidency conferences and EaSI national contact points.

As regards **safeguarding assets**, DG EMPL will monitor the evolution of the assets pooled into the portfolio managed by the European Investment Fund on behalf of the EU and take action in the event of underperformance.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, **the audit plans for both direct and shared management will be subject to adaptation compared to the previous year**, as

²⁹ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 48).

travel restrictions may continue in 2021. Remote audits will thus remain the standard approach, as in 2020.

In line with the single audit strategy developed by the DGs responsible for the European Structural and Investment Funds for the 2014-2020 programming period, the audit work in 2021 will **focus on reviewing the work of the national Audit Authorities** through compliance audits. The aim is to assess the level of reliability the Commission can place in their work, to avoid duplication of audit effort and the audit burden borne by auditees.

The **Interruptions-Suspensions-Financial Corrections Committee** chaired by the Director-General will continue meeting regularly. The Committee analyses the cases brought to its attention, takes the appropriate decisions and monitors their effective implementation.

Under the **2021 Audit Plan**, DG EMPL will carry out 26 audits for direct management finances and 5 audits for the European Globalisation adjustment Fund. In addition, under the terms of the Joint audit strategy with DG REGIO, DG EMPL will be responsible for the additional direct management audit work to be undertaken on behalf of DG REGIO, using DG EMPL's existing methodology and expertise.

C. Fraud risk management³⁰

DG EMPL will implement the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy in 2021 through its local Anti-Fraud Strategies for direct and shared management, which were reviewed in 2019. The main actions are multiannual and will include, as in 2020:

- ✓ (in-house) **Developing search tools for identifying double funding, implementing the use of IT tools that detect plagiarism**, such as URKUND, and examining the possibility of loading details of previous EU projects / contracts into URKUND so that it can detect plagiarism from such sources as well, and **considering the use of or links with the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area** and increasing the in-house use of the **Commission's Financial Transparency System, ARACHNE and similar IT tools** that present information on the sources of financing.
- ✓ (shared management) **Help Member States to implement data-mining tools such as ARACHNE**, in line with the Common Provisions Regulation for 2021-2027 which makes such tools mandatory.
- ✓ **Reviewing the Training and Exchanges of Experience** about OLAF-related procedures and the use by the members of evaluation committees / selection panels

³⁰ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 48).

of IT tools for detecting suspicious circumstances and know-how about how to spot forgeries, by conducting a training needs assessment.

- ✓ **Reviewing DG EMPL's intranet pages on combating fraud.**
- ✓ **Reviewing DG EMPL's publications policy, with a view to reinforcing guidance by the senior management** on the anti-fraud policy and measures in relevant publications in order to generate a deterrent effect, and by highlighting the whistleblowing and whistleblower-protection mechanisms.
- ✓ **Keeping the list of DG EMPL's red flags updated**³¹.
- ✓ **Supporting Member States in further administrative capacity building in the field of fraud prevention and detection** by developing template letters for the follow up on OLAF reports. These include a paragraph on the obligations of the Managing Authorities to systematically report fraud suspicions to the national criminal and judicial authorities (in addition to the Irregularity Management Systems) and to assess the wider implications of fraud cases uncovered in their programmes. DG EMPL and the other DGs dealing with the European Structural and Investment Funds will continue to produce or update guidance, share best practices on relevant topics, offer training, exchange with the Member States on anti-fraud policy, and systematically invite OLAF to meetings, including those of the expert group on European Structural and Investment Funds, annual control meetings and technical meetings with Audit Authorities.

D. Digital transformation and information management³²

As in previous years, the work on improvements of **MyEMPLNet** as the DG's main collaborative platform will continue in 2021.

Promotion of the units' **collaborative sites** on MyIntraComm will also continue.

The roll-out of the pilot on **Microsoft Teams** will offer DG EMPL staff opportunities for improved information management and collaboration.

In 2021, DG EMPL will look into the options for setting up a **basic knowledge management strategy**, with the support of DG HR and the Commission knowledge management network. This task was initially planned for 2020, but the exceptional work conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to carry it out.

³¹ Indicators/signs of potential fraud or warning signals that highlight developments or situations where there might be irregularities or suspected fraud, i.e. if a situation, project, proposal and/or beneficiary entails certain factual elements that constitute a warning that fraud may be present. The existence of red flags does not mean that fraud has arisen or may occur, but that the situation should be checked and monitored with due diligence.

³² This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 49).

The work on **EU open data platform**³³ will also continue in 2021 with DG EMPL focusing on identifying and publishing suitable datasets.

DG EMPL will continue processing **old paper files preserved in units' archives** in order to comply with Commission's eDomec preservation rules and make an efficient use of the archive space allotted to the DG.

DG EMPL will also continue facilitating **access to and sharing of electronic files** to support the transition to a paperless Commission. In this context, DG EMPL will develop the use of public procurement management tools, implement e-Grants and e-Experts IT tools for direct management of grants, and continue developing and implementing the integration of IT systems with the corporate records management system HermesAresNomCom - HAN (SFC2021 for the management and exchange of documents related to the programmes under Common Provisions Regulation Funds 2021-2027, RDIS2-DM for contracts management, etc.), which will enable electronic documents to be registered and filed automatically in HermesAresNomCom.

As regards **document management**, DG EMPL will work on the following priorities:

- ✓ continue promoting the use of electronic workflows and systems;
- ✓ continue promoting electronic archiving, including the transfer of official financial files with paper component to DG EMPL's Intermediate Archives and the transfer of official electronic files to the Commission's Historical Archives;
- ✓ continue processing central and local pre-eDomec paper archives and reduce the accumulated backlog.

To support the modernisation of the service, DG EMPL will continue to participate actively in the **European Commission Digital Strategy**. The principles of the strategy are set out in the **Digital Solutions Modernisation Plan**, the purpose of which is to provide order and direction for the further development of the Commission's digital landscape, in support of business requirements and improved processes. The plan represents a collective effort by all DGs to reflect on ways to modernise the systems that support their business functions, this being the main input for the basis of the plan. DG EMPL nominated a leader for this initiative and two experts in 2020. They will provide input into the modernisation strategy and will continue to participate in this process throughout 2021.

Data protection is not a one-off exercise but a continuous effort. The accountability principle calls for a higher degree of ownership of data protection by the Commission's top managers and a more intensive engagement of all Commission staff in ensuring and demonstrating compliance with the data protection rules in their daily tasks. This was further reinforced by the adoption of the Implementing Rules in July 2020.

³³ [EU open data platform](#).

In this area, DG EMPL's data protection coordinator will continue to provide support in 2021 to all staff on issues relating to data protection. The DG is also planning a number of awareness-raising exercises such as articles on the intranet and guidelines for staff. A series of training sessions are also envisaged including specialised ones on agreements with external processors, audits and replying to requests from data subjects.

E. Sound environmental management³⁴

DG EMPL will continue to apply the working methods and tools developed during the pandemic also in 2021.

DG EMPL intends to **reduce the number of presential meetings** in 2021 and replace them with online events, thus cutting the carbon footprint of the service.

Independently of the COVID-19 pandemic, DG EMPL will increase its efforts to **reduce the number of missions**. A better use of teleconferencing tools will become a top priority. In cases where the mission is deemed necessary, participation will be carefully assessed to keep the number of staff members attending to a minimum.

The use of **recyclable office supplies** or **refill-type stationery, non-plastic plates and cutlery** for lunch or office gatherings and **water fountains** in the cafeteria will become the norm in 2021.

DG EMPL will also continue to reduce its use of printed documents with the aim of becoming **paperless** by the end of 2021.

DG EMPL is also committed to **limiting its carbon footprint** by reducing the number of non-essential e-mails and by switching off computers at the end of the working day, two actions that generate the highest use of the energy among the office activities. This effort will be supported by workshops on limiting the carbon footprint in the office and while teleworking, and awareness-raising campaigns.

F. Example of an initiative to improve the economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities

DG EMPL is in the process of switching to the corporate **e-Grants** system, with the aim of launching all its 2021 calls for proposals fully through this IT tool. The e-Grants tool will affect those 2021-2027 programmes that are directly managed by DG EMPL, such as the

³⁴ This fiche should be read in conjunction with the performance tables available in the annex (page 49).

EaSI strand of the ESF+, parts of the ERASMUS+ and CERV programmes, and the expenditure incurred under the Prerogatives budget lines.

The initiative will improve economy and efficiency for both DG EMPL and its grant applicants and beneficiaries, as:

- ✓ the system relies on a Participant Portal that is common to other programmes of the Commission, which should make things easier for grant applicants and beneficiaries;
- ✓ it brings the calls for proposals to a wider audience of potential beneficiaries;
- ✓ they can prepare their application online, but can also use the portal to upload documents, report on progress, and publish information aimed at the general public on their project and its results;
- ✓ the system will enable interested parties to follow projects step by step and replicate or even upscale individual projects in their own region or country;
- ✓ it will also enable interested parties to build further on the project's results;
- ✓ the system allows a higher level of automation than the current automated system used by the DG;
- ✓ the few remaining separate flows will be entirely paperless;
- ✓ the system allows participants to sign contracts digitally;
- ✓ it helps the Commission communicate the results of its funding, demonstrating the added value of EU programmes, and provides specific reports on the use of the funds, the policy issues addressed, and the target groups helped.

These benefits will start to materialise after the usual learning period and will accrue further in the future years as the grants awarded under the 2014-2020 programmes come to an end.

ANNEX: Performance tables

Since it is impossible to anticipate and gauge the full impact of COVID-19 on the work of DG EMPL, the indicators for this management plan may need to be reviewed in the course of the year.

Indicators supporting part 1 of the management plan³⁵

General objective 2: A Europe fit for the digital age		
Specific objective 2.1: A digitally skilled workforce		<i>Related to spending programmes: - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, Erasmus and EaSI; - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, Erasmus+ and InvestEU; - Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.</i>
Main outputs in 2021:		
New policy initiatives		
Output	Indicator	Target
SELFIE for work-based learning	Full roll-out	Q4
European Digital Skills Certificate	Finalisation of the feasibility study	Q4
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Europass platform and Europass Digitally Signed Credentials	Launch event (online)	Q1
	Number of Europass registered users by the end of 2021	3 500 000
	Visits to the Europass website by the end of 2021	28 000 000
	Number of Member States issuing Europass Digitally Signed Credentials by the end of 2021	18
EU ICT-Jump-Start training	Press release	Q4
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
EU-ICT-Jump-Start training	Launch of call	Q4

³⁵  Shows the initiatives from the 2021 Commission Work Programme.


General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.1: Effective support to Member States in their structural reforms and investments in the context of the European Semester

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, FEAD and Erasmus;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, Erasmus+ and InvestEU.
 - Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Communication and Staff Working Document on the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights	Adoption	Q1
New Employment Guidelines	Adoption by the Council	Q4

External communication actions

Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Communication actions on the adoption of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights	Reach: number of people exposed to content or participating in an action.	3 000 000
	Engagement: number of comments, shares and likes as a result of the communication actions	15 000

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Proposal for 2021 Joint Employment Report	Adoption	Q4
Analytical documents assessing the national recovery and resilience plans	Publication	Q2
Report on Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe	Publication	Q4

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.2: Stronger social dialogue

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: Prerogatives and ESF;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: Prerogatives and ESF+.

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Organisation of social dialogue meetings	Number of meetings	167

Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction

Output	Indicator	Target
Review of sectoral social dialogue	Number of consultation meetings with social partners for input into the Strategic Social Partner seminar in autumn 2021	3

Evaluations and fitness checks

Output	Indicator	Target
Specific hearings with social partners on Commission initiatives	Number of specific hearings	> 5

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
Three newsletters on social dialogue	Number of people exposed to the content	> 2 400


General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.3: Decent and safe working conditions for all


Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+.

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions on an EU	Adoption	Q2

Occupational Safety and Health Strategy for 2021-2027		
Public consultations		
Output	Indicator	Target
Public consultation for the new Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Framework	Completion	Q2
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Press conference on the new EU Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework	Organisation	Q2

General objective 3: An economy that works for people		
Specific objective 3.4: Better functioning labour markets		<i>Related to spending programmes:</i> - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF and EGF; - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+ and EGF; - Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.
Main outputs in 2021:		
New policy initiatives		
Output	Indicator	Target
 Improving the working conditions of platform workers	Adoption by Commission	Q4 ³⁶
Evaluations and fitness checks		
Output	Indicator	Target
Impact assessment for the initiative on improving the working conditions of platform workers (if legislative)	Adoption	Q4
Public consultations		
Output	Indicator	Target
First stage formal consultation of social partners on improving the working conditions of platform workers	Adoption	Q1
Second stage formal consultation of social partners on improving the working conditions of platform workers	Adoption	Q2

³⁶ Subject to the outcome of the social partners consultation.


General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.5: Greater social fairness and more effective social protection

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF and FEAD;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+;
 - Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Recommendation for a European Child Guarantee	Adoption	Q1

Public consultations

Output	Indicator	Target
Public consultation on the Green Paper on Ageing	Launch	Q1

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Joint Commission – Social Protection Committee report on long-term care	Adoption/publication	Q2
Joint Commission – Social Protection Committee report on pension adequacy	Adoption/publication	Q2

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.6: Enhanced labour mobility

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+.

Main outputs in 2021:

Evaluations and fitness checks


Output	Indicator	Target
Commission Report on the ex post evaluation of the operation and effects of EURES Regulation 2016/589	Adoption	Q2
Staff Working Document on the ex post evaluation of the operation and effects of EURES Regulation 2016/589	Publication	Q2

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.7: More jobs created and sustained in micro- and social enterprises

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: EaSI;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+ and InvestEU Social Window.

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Action Plan for the Social Economy	Adoption	Q4

Evaluations and fitness checks

Output	Indicator	Target
Study to support the ex post evaluation of the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation for 2014-2020 and the final evaluation of the European Progress Microfinance for 2010-2016	Launch	Q1

Public consultations



Output	Indicator	Target
Public consultation on the ex post evaluation of the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation for 2014-2020	Completion	Q4

General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life

Specific objective 5.1: A skilled workforce to master the green and digital transition

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, EaSI and Erasmus;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, Erasmus+ and InvestEU;
 - Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Initiative on Individual Learning Accounts	Adoption	Q4
 Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials	Adoption	Q4

Evaluations and fitness checks

Output	Indicator	Target
Impact assessment on a EU initiative on Individual Learning Accounts	Publication	Q4
Evaluation of the implementation of Council Recommendation 2017/C 189/03 on a European Qualifications Framework	Completion	Q4
Evaluation on the implementation of Council Recommendation 2016/C 484/01 on Upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults	Launch	Q2
Public consultations		
Output	Indicator	Target
Public consultation on micro-credentials	Completion	Q1
Public consultation on Individual Learning Accounts	Launch	Q1
Public consultation on the implementation of Council Recommendation 2016/C 484/01 on Upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults	Completion	Q4
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Communication package on the initiative on Individual Learning Accounts	Press release and press conference	Q4
	Communication products for use on social media (e.g. videos, infographics)	Q4
	High-Level Forum on Individual Learning Accounts – number of participants/viewers	500
Communication package on the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials	Press release and press conference	Q4
	Communication products for use on social media (e.g. videos, infographics)	Q3
Implementation of the Skills Agenda	Webpages renewed to focus on achievements of the Skills Agenda and show progress of individual actions, accompanied by news items tailored to the group targeted by the action (eg. Wide-ranging public promotion of the Europass portal, Member State governments on the development of national whole-of-government skills strategies)	Q2
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target

Implementation of the Skills Agenda: further developments in actions launched in 2020 (e.g. Pact for Skills, Europass and ongoing action on making available skills intelligence and tailoring it to different target groups such as individuals or Public Employment Services)	Progress against the 12 flagship and 47 component actions of the Skills Agenda	Q4
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General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life

Specific objective 5.2: Vocational education and training effectively addresses the labour market needs and prepares people for the green and digital transition

Related to spending programmes:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF, EaSI and Erasmus;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+, Erasmus+ and InvestEU;
 - Next Generation EU: RRF, JTF and REACT-EU.

Main outputs in 2021:

External communication actions

Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
European Vocational Skills Week	Number of events organised at local level	> 550
	Number of participants / viewers of the event	1 200 000

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Monitoring the implementation of the Vocational Education and Training Recommendation with the assistance of Cedefop, feeding into the European Semester and other, in line with the 3 quantitative monitoring and reporting frameworks (notably Education and Training Monitor)	Provide inputs to country reports / fiches	Q3
Centres of Vocational Excellence	Select the projects	Q4
Peer reviews on quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training at system level	Finalise the EQAVET peer review methodology	Q3
European Vocational Core Profiles	Review the draft concept and operational model	Q4
Monitoring of the implementation of the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships	Submit report to the Council (SWD)	Q2


General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.1: Equality

Related to spending programme:
 - 2014-2020 financial framework: ESF and REC;
 - 2021-2027 financial framework: ESF+ and CERV;
 - Next Generation EU: REACT-EU and RRF.

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030	Adoption	Q1

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
Communication campaign on the new Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities	Number of people exposed to content or participating in an action	> 1 000 000
Access City Award	Number of participating cities	> 40
European Day of Persons with Disabilities	Number of participants	> 400

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Report on the application of the Directive 2000/78 on Employment Equality and Directive 2000/43 on Race Equality	Adoption	Q1

Indicators supporting part 2 of the management plan

Objective: DG EMPL employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Female talent development	First female appointments to middle management positions	2 [target set by SG for 2020-2022 (SEC(2020)146) – already achieved]
Staff engagement	Staff engagement index	At least 3% above the Commission average in the next Staff Survey
Female talent development	Number of individual coaching packages offered	At least 3 packages

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Risk at payment	Remains < 2% of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	Remains < 2% of relevant expenditure
Effective controls: Safeguarded assets ³⁷	Absolute return of the portfolio	Benchmark
Efficient controls	Budget execution	Remains 95% of payment appropriations
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	Remains 0.2% of funds managed

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS)³⁸ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction³⁹ of fraud

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Increasing the use by Member States authorities of specific IT tools to prevent and detect potential fraud and conflicts of interests	Number of named users of ARACHNE in Member States	5 000
Updating DG EMPL's training policy and training courses on offer	Number of training courses held	12

³⁷ The comparison between absolute return (the return that an asset achieves over a specified period) and relative return (the return an asset achieves over a period of time compared to a benchmark - a standard against which the performance of an investment manager can be measured) reflects the overperformance or the underperformance of an asset versus its benchmark. In the case of EaSI, assets are pooled into a portfolio managed by the EIF on behalf of the EU.

³⁸ Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

³⁹ 'Correction of fraud' is an umbrella term referring to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

Objective: DG EMPL is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Continue using correct electronic workflows in Ares	% of Ares internal and outgoing documents that have an e-signatory	95%
File all DG EMPL's registered documents	% of non-filed documents since the beginning of Ares	0.25%
Basic DG EMPL Knowledge Management Strategy	Set up	Q4
DG EMPL staff uses calendars and collaborative sites on MyIntraComm collab	% of units using collaborative sites	80%
Implementation of digital strategy	Degree of implementation	72%
Staff trained and informed of rules and regulations relating to personal data protection in the Commission	% of staff trained / informed (the % increases every year so that by 2024 all staff are trained / informed of rules and regulations relating to personal data protection in the Commission)	50% of staff 95% of senior and middle management and 100% of newcomers.

Objective: DG EMPL takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work

Main results and outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Reduction of pollution	Fewer missions	Reduce by 40% compared to 2019
Reduction of pollution	Less paper used	Reduce by 80%
Workshops	Organise thematic workshops on limiting the carbon footprint	3
Information campaign	Posters made of recycled paper in the building	Q4
	On the intranet	Q4