



# Strategic Plan 2020-2024

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

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## INTRODUCTION

The multiannual **Strategic Plan** sets the frame to ensure that the Commission delivers efficiently and effectively on its political ambitions; it defines clear objectives and indicators to monitor and manage the process. Structured in two parts, it explains how the Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) will contribute to the Commission priorities (part 1) and the resources allocated to deliver them (part 2), with a strong emphasis on modernising the working environment through digitalisation and increased focus on sustainability.



These are pursued step by step in annual **Management Plans** and the progress made towards the objectives is presented in the **Annual Activity Reports**.

The core source of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 is the political agenda of the Commission President Ursula von der Leyen<sup>1</sup> which is cascaded down into the mission letters addressed to Commissioners.

DG EMPL focuses its 2020-2024 strategy on the responsibilities from Commissioner Nicolas Schmit's and Commissioner Helena Dalli's mission letters<sup>2</sup> and integrates the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in its plans. The highlights of its strategy are: developing an **action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights**, putting forward a legal instrument to ensure that every worker in EU has a **fair minimum wage**, improving the labour conditions of **platform workers**, contributing to the design of a **European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme**, building up the **just transition to climate neutrality**, helping establish and supporting the work of the newly created **European Labour Authority**, promoting **social dialogue**, strengthening **social protection systems** in Europe, reinforcing the **Youth Guarantee**, leading the work on developing a **European Child Guarantee** to fight poverty, developing a **European Action Plan for Social Economy** and implementing and updating the **Skills Agenda**. Besides strengthening the EU's own social and jobs dimension, DG EMPL will also contribute to international trade agreements by ensuring, among others, **zero-tolerance on child labour**. These employment and social matters are also at the heart of the '**Next generation EU**'<sup>3</sup> strategy which sets out the Commission's proposal for the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and the confinement measures taken by the Member States.

The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 crisis might have a lasting effect on EU societies as well as on the Commission's working methods; therefore, the priorities and indicators set out in the present Strategic Plan may have to be adapted in the course of the 2020-2024 period.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europa.eu/!kK49uD>

<sup>2</sup> <https://europa.eu/!Km78vk>, <https://europa.eu/!yx37Fn>

<sup>3</sup> <https://europa.eu/!mk48Pk>

## **PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities**

### **A. Mission statement**

The Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion pursues policy, legislative and financial initiatives to build a highly competitive social market economy in the European Union. The **European Pillar of Social Rights** is the EU social strategy to ensure that the transitions to climate-neutrality, digitalisation and demographic change are socially fair and just. Through the implementation of 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 the rights of persons with disabilities.

### **B. Operating context**

#### **Legal obligations and competences**

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that in determining and implementing its policies and activities, the EU has to take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion and a high level of education, training and protection of human health (Article 9 of the TFEU). Other specific responsibilities of DG EMPL enshrined in the Treaties include the implementation of the fundamental right of 'Free Movement of Workers' (Article 45 of the TFEU), the coordination of social security systems (Article 48 of the TFEU), the promotion of social dialogue and of improved living and working conditions (Articles 151 to 155 of the TFEU) and the application of a vocational training policy (Article 166 of the TFEU).

DG EMPL is also in charge of implementing the European Social Fund (ESF) through which it aims to improve employment opportunities for workers in the internal market and to contribute thereby to raising their standard of living (Article 162 of the TFEU), and to develop actions leading to the strengthening of the Union economic, social and territorial cohesion (Article 174 of the TFEU).

DG EMPL also contributes to the employment and social dimension of enlargement and of globalisation through international agreements.

The responsibility for fulfilling the above objectives as well as for policy setting in the field of employment, social affairs and inclusion is shared between the EU and its Member States (Article 4 and 5 of the TFEU).

## Types of intervention

DG EMPL's main areas of intervention towards the attainment of its objectives are:

- ✓ Policy development, guidance, coordination and governance in the areas of employment, social inclusion and equality, including through the European Semester process based on the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and through a further integration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- ✓ Legislation on working conditions, occupational health and safety, free movement, coordination of social security, non-discrimination and equal opportunities;
- ✓ Management of a wide range of funding instruments under different modes:
  - *Shared management with the Member States:* the European Social Fund (ESF) including the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), both to be part of the ESF+ shared management strand from 2021, and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF).  
As part of EU's response to COVID-19 pandemic, DG EMPL will also support the Member States in implementing the funding received under the Next Generation EU package, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and REACT-EU.
  - *Direct management by DG EMPL:* the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) that will become a strand within ESF+ starting 2021, part of Erasmus+, part of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) that will be merged into the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV) and funds allocated by virtue of the powers conferred by the Treaty (so-called 'Prerogatives') for social dialogue, mobility, analysis of the social situation, demographics and the family; and contributions to five decentralised agencies.
  - *Indirect management with third countries and international organisations:* operational programmes under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (2007-2013 period) which are currently at closure phase and actions related to EaSI that are implemented either by international organisations or by the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund and which will become part of the InvestEU programme starting 2021.

With a total budget of EUR 98.5 billion for the 2014-2020 programming period, in addition to the amounts remaining from previous programming periods, DG EMPL is responsible for approximately 9% of the EU budget. This proportion is proposed also for the 2021-2027 programming period for which negotiations are ongoing.

## Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders of DG EMPL are the Member States, social partners, civil society organisations, other international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations, and five decentralised agencies for which it acts as parent DG: The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), European Labour Authority (ELA), The European Training Foundation (ETF), The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) and The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound).



The core element of DG EMPL's strategy for 2020-2024 is the further implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**<sup>5</sup>. The Pillar also features as the compass for employment, skills and social matters in the 'Next Generation EU' plans that target the recovery from the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. As such, the Pillar will support the preservation of jobs and promote quality job opportunities and education and training, will contribute to better working conditions for all, and will help strengthen social protection as well as fight inequalities and poverty as part of the recovery process.

A horizontal milestone for DG EMPL in the reference period is the **adoption of the regulation for the future European Social Fund (ESF+) and the one for the European Globalisation Fund (EGF)**, and the **subsequent launch of the 2021-2027 programmes** in close collaboration with the Member States.

The launch of the **Next Generation EU** package will also help the Member States in addressing the challenges identified in the European Semester through large-scale financial support to reforms and investments in the context of a just transition. The main tools for providing this support will be the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** and the **Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU)**, as part of the package.

Another long-term instrument that DG EMPL envisages is a **permanent European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme** that would make the European labour market more resilient in the future.

Overall, DG EMPL aims to safeguard **better regulation** aspects in all regulatory proposals. From this perspective, DG EMPL will look at ways to ensure that the regulations are targeted, easy to comply with and do not add unnecessary regulatory burden. In addition, in line with the mission letters of Commissioner Nicolas Schmit and Commissioner Helena Dalli, DG EMPL will ensure that every legislative proposal creating new burdens also relieves people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area. The relationship between the Commission's internal rules for Better Regulation and the obligatory consultation of social partners which is laid down in Articles 153 and 154 of the TFEU still requires further clarification.

## **General objective 1: A European Green Deal**

Climate change is happening and posing a real threat to the quality of life and livelihoods in the EU in the coming years and decades. A pressing challenge, responsibility and opportunity for Europe is keeping our planet and people healthy.

But the transition is neither automatic nor socially inclusive by default and it can only succeed if costs and benefits are shared fairly and if there is broad public support.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://europa.eu/Rc63QY>

Progressing to an environmentally sustainable and socially fair economy will bring with it new opportunities of job creation and business development, including expected net job creation of up to 2 million jobs by 2050 due to climate action only. New jobs will be, to a large extent, quality jobs for medium-skilled workers in construction, industry, the circular economy and energy production. At the same time, the transition will require that an important number of workers adjust their skills and retrain to change jobs or occupations and the new generation get access to quality education and training that is well aligned to labour market and societal evolutions. Policies need to help address expected job losses, facilitate labour market transitions and mitigate adverse effects on poverty.

Against this background, DG EMPL will indirectly contribute to the attainment of the green deal objectives through ensuring a fair and socially balanced just transition, in particular through the following key actions and policy outputs:

- ✓ (contribution to the) design of transformative policies and promotion of transformative change, making consistent use of all policy levers: regulation and standardisation, investment and innovation, national reforms, corporate governance, social dialogue and international cooperation;
- ✓ (contribution to the) development of skills needed for the green transition, notably through support for the training needed in multiple professions to deliver on the Renovation Wave for energy efficient constructions and renovations of public and private buildings;
- ✓ implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, including guiding action in ensuring that no one is left behind;
- ✓ (contribution to the) implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Just Transition Mechanism and the Just Transition Fund, and use of the ESF+ to support the transition to climate-neutrality;
- ✓ (contribution to the) assessment of National Energy and Climate Plans under the Energy governance, and of the progress under a European Climate Law;
- ✓ development of modelling capacity, tools and indicators, and regular assessment of the socio-economic impact of the transition to climate-neutrality;
- ✓ technical and analytical inputs to actions under the European Green Deal, including to monitoring and governance processes (Energy Union/National Energy and Climate Plans; Climate Law; Environment Action Programme, etc.) and to impact assessments (notably for the 2030 Climate Target Plan, for initiatives on energy taxation and border adjustment mechanisms, for a new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change and for reviews on the Energy Efficiency and Emissions Trading System Directives and the Effort Sharing Regulation);
- ✓ mainstreaming of employment, social and distributional aspects and integration of Social Sciences and Humanities throughout the Horizon Europe programme, including in Missions on Climate and in Clusters 4 (Digital, industry and space) and 5 (Climate, energy and mobility).

Through these actions and outputs, DG EMPL will contribute to the following elements 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’ and the ‘Renovation Wave’; ‘From Farm to Fork: a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system’; and ‘Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility’.

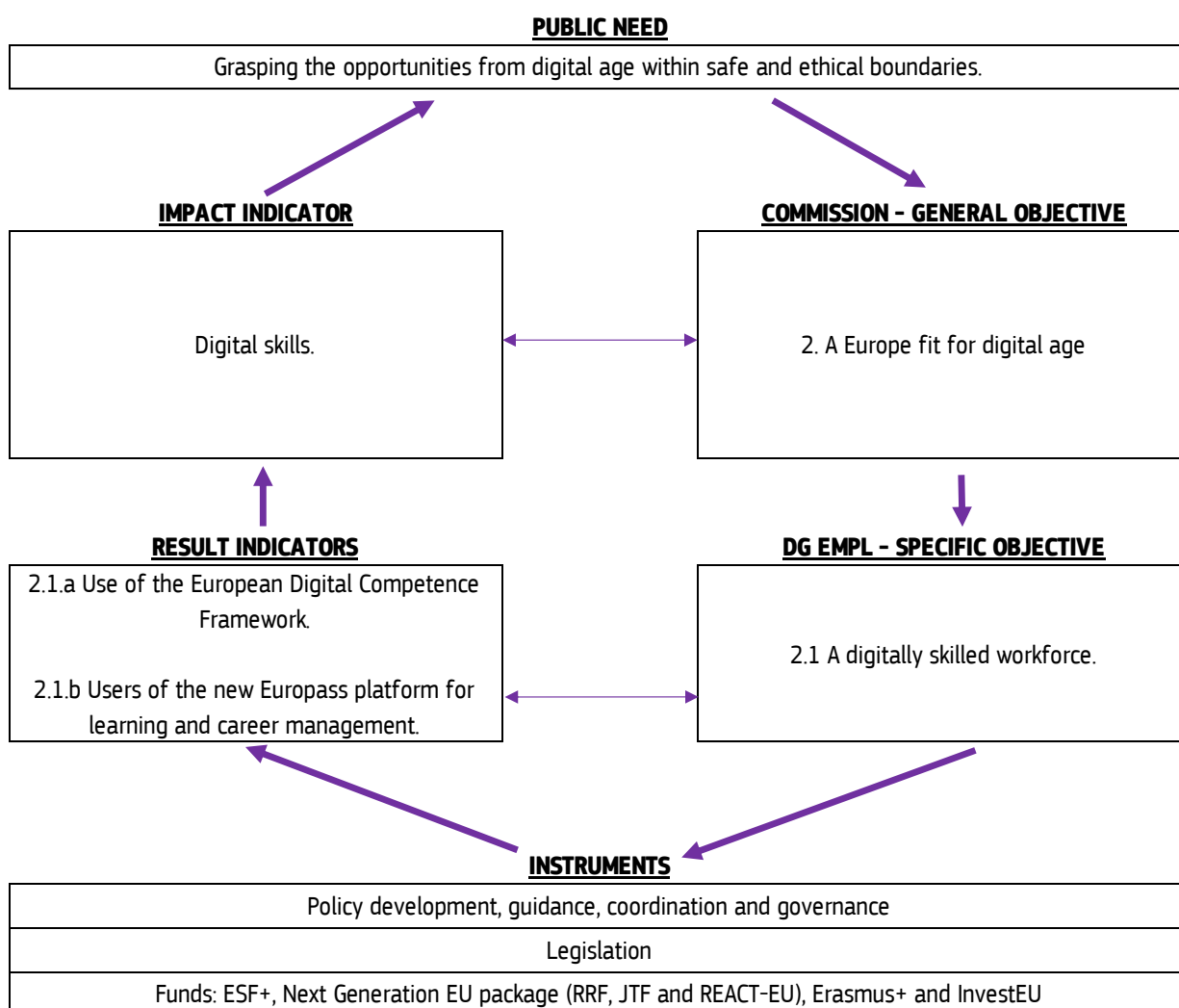


## General objective 2: A Europe fit for the digital age

Digital transformation is characterised by a fusion of advanced technologies and the integration of physical and digital systems, the predominance of innovative business models and new processes, and the creation of smart products and services.

The new digital technologies drive competitiveness and innovation but, from the human resources perspective, Europe is not yet fully ready to embrace these. In 2017, only 57% of the population aged 16 to 74 had basic digital skills.

DG EMPL is set to contribute to enable a just and ethical digital transition where nobody is left behind through a specific objective on digitally skilled workforce focused on the support of adults to acquire at least basic digital skills. The logic of intervention of DG EMPL is presented below and detailed in the following section:



## **Specific objective 2.1: A digitally skilled workforce**

Digital skills are key to support upskilling and reskilling of the workforce and ensure competitiveness, innovation capacity and social cohesion to successfully drive forward the digital transition. The COVID-19 crisis emphasizes the urgency of developing digital skills as well as the offer of distance online learning for many workers and learners.

Progress in this field will be measured by DG EMPL with two indicators on digital skills: (1) *Use of European Digital Competence Framework* and (2) *Users of the new Europass platform for learning and career management*.

The extension of the digital skills self-reflection tool 'SELFIE' to work-based learning environments and potentially also to non-formal learning providers for adults will be a key policy output for the period. This will help companies and other providers assess their 'digital readiness' for this type of training provision. Action on SELFIE in the VET sector and potentially adult learning sector will be part of the updated Digital Education Action Plan and the updated Skills Agenda and its VET modernisation flagship.

The new Europass platform for people to manage their learning and careers is ready for launch in July 2020. As well as a multilingual eportfolio for users to communicate their skills and qualifications, the platform will link people up with tailored learning opportunities and, via EURES, with jobs. Future releases of Europass will also include tools for users to self-assess their skills based on the European Digital Competence Framework and SELFIE.

As part of the updated Skills Agenda, digital will be an important red thread in the proposal for a Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training which calls for measures to innovate and modernise VET, notably in terms of new learning environments, tools and pedagogies, with a special focus on digitalisation and digital resilience.

Improving basic digital skills is specifically tackled by the 2016 Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways which puts a focus on digital skills for low qualified or low skilled adults. In 2022, the Commission will evaluate and report on the progress.

The communication campaign around the reinforced Skills Agenda and the proposal for a Council Recommendation on VET will focus on skills for the green and digital transitions and contribute to the corporate communication campaigns in these areas. Communication materials and social media updates will also be pursued while the European Vocational Skills Week will be a good opportunity for presenting and exchanging ideas on the progress made.

The launch of the new Europass platform will benefit from an online promotional campaign together with the National Europass Centres and will be followed by regular outreach waves.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong 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'. They will also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, (principle 1 'Education, training and life-long learning' and 4 'Active support to employment').

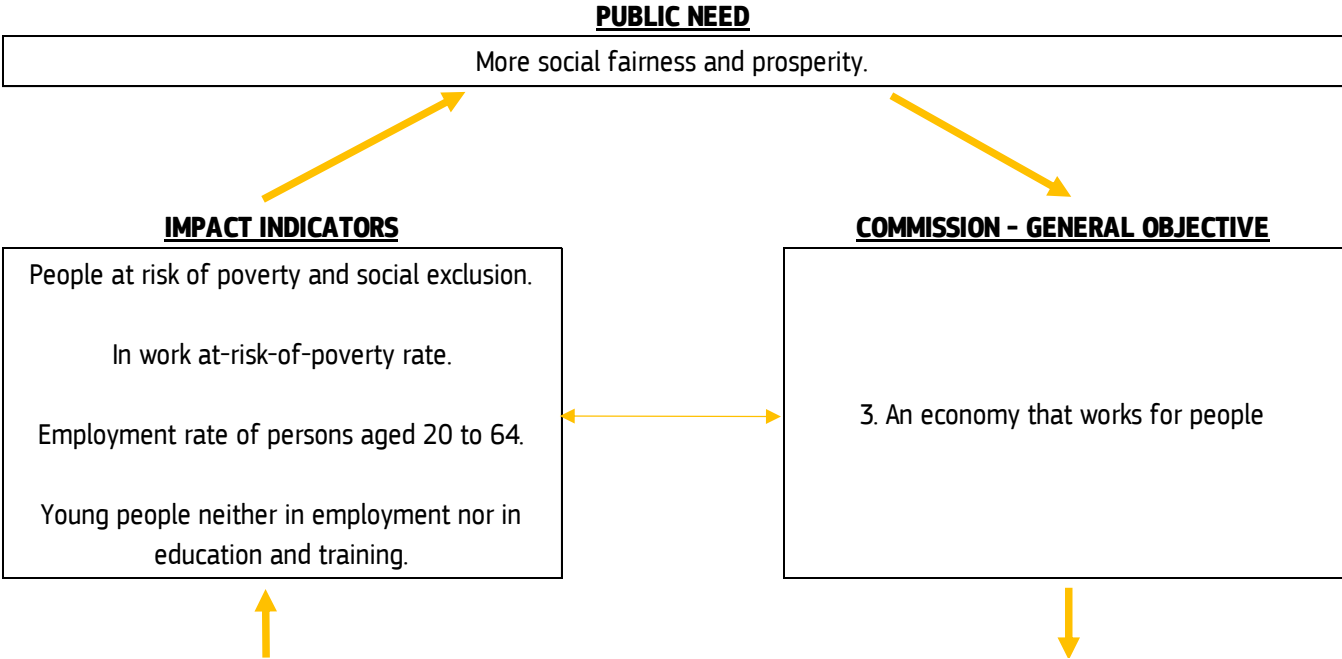
**General objective 3: An economy that works for people**

One of the Commission’s top priorities is to strive for more social fairness, equality and prosperity by promoting the EU social market economy and ensuring that the economic policy goes hand in hand with social rights. This includes supporting those in work to earn a decent living and those out of work to find a job.

On average, unemployment rate at EU level stood at 6.2% of the total active population in December 2019. From this, 39.7% is the share of long-term unemployment. Moreover, the proportion of young people neither in employment nor in education and training reached 12.9% in 2018. These figures are likely to increase as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak (Spring 2020 European Economic Forecast<sup>6</sup>), hence confirming the need for structural reforms in the Member States, stronger social dialogue, better functioning labour markets, enhanced labour mobility, and creation and preservation of more jobs in micro- and social enterprises. All these aspects are followed by DG EMPL in its specific objectives.

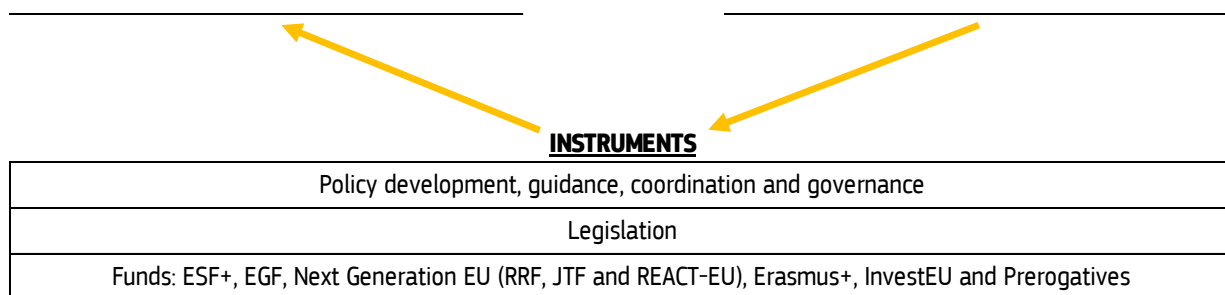
The unemployment rate has a direct effect on the poverty levels. From this perspective, the total number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion stood at 110 million people or 21.9% of total population in 2018 and 24% for children. Progress towards achieving the Europe 2020 strategy target of lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty compared to 2008 (115.7 million people) remains insufficient. Moreover 9.5% of the working force is currently at risk of poverty. These figures are also likely to increase as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, hence confirming the need for greater social fairness and more effective social protection in the Member States as well as ensuring decent and safe working conditions.

The illustration below shows the logic of intervention of DG EMPL:



<sup>6</sup> <https://europa.eu/!gY37bX>

<b>RESULT INDICATORS</b>	<b>DG EMPL - SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES</b>
3.1.a Level of implementation of the employment and social policy components of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), based on a disaggregation by priorities of each CSR.	3.1 Effective support to Member States in their structural reforms and investments in the context of the European Semester.
3.2.a Share of the EU workforce covered by sectoral social dialogue committees. 3.2.b Social dialogue outcomes.	3.2 Stronger social dialogue.
3.3.a Percentage of complaints, EU Pilot and infringement procedures handled within Commission benchmarks.	3.3 Decent and safe working conditions for all.
3.4.a Participants (unemployed and inactive) in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention. 3.4.b Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention. 3.4.c Unemployed, including long-term unemployed, participants supported by the ESF+ shared management. 3.4.d Young people below 30 years of age supported by the ESF+ shared management. 3.4.e Percentage of EGF beneficiaries in employment and self-employed six months after the end of the implementing period.	3.4 Better functioning labour markets.
3.5.a Number of persons with a foreign background and minorities (including marginalised communities such as Roma) reached by the ESF+ shared management. 3.5.b Participants above 54 years old reached by ESF+ shared management. 3.5.c Number of persons receiving food and material support from ESF+ shared management. 3.5.d Number of children receiving food and material support from ESF+ shared management.	3.5 Greater social fairness and more effective social protection.
3.6.a Facilitate labour mobility.	3.6 Enhanced labour mobility.
3.7.a Jobs created.	3.7 More jobs created and sustained in micro- and social enterprises.



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

As part of the European Semester process, DG EMPL aims at providing guidance and solid analysis in the employment and social areas, and at fostering coordination and governance of employment and social policies in the Member States.

During the 2020-2024 period, DG EMPL will contribute to achieve the priorities set in the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategies and to address the new employment and social challenges related to the employment and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. The Action Plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which will be presented in 2021, will guide further action for stepping up employment and social objectives in the European Semester and possibly follow up to Europe 2020 in the social domain. In this context, DG EMPL aims to propose new employment and social targets, and monitor the progress.

Moreover, President von der Leyen announced in her political guidelines the intention to propose a European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme to protect EU citizens and reduce the pressure on national public finances during external shocks. This major political initiative aims at strengthening social cohesion by supporting those who are at risk of losing their jobs due to external events that affect the European economy. In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission put forward in 2020 a proposal for a crisis financial assistance instrument (SURE) to fund short-time work schemes and similar measures aimed at preserving employment<sup>7</sup>. The implementation of this instrument will be accompanied by analysis and monitoring of national short-time work schemes and similar measures taken by Member States in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In the second half of 2020, DG EMPL will continue to feed the preparatory work for establishing a similar instrument on a permanent basis.

DG EMPL will contribute to these analysis and monitoring with three reports:

- the annual *Joint Employment Report* that analyses the employment and social situation in Europe by highlighting the areas in which progress has been made and where more needs to be done;

<sup>7</sup> Council Regulation (EU) 2020/672 of 19 May 2020 on the establishment of a European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) following the COVID-19 outbreak.

- the annual *Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe (LMWD)* review that analyses from a macroeconomic perspective the EU and the Member States' labour markets and related policy issues;
- the annual and quarterly *Employment and Social Development in Europe reviews (ESDE)* that is assessing employment, demographic and social developments in the EU in line with the Treaty mandate, with a focus on a different topic every year (e.g. fairness and solidarity in 2020).

Implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights in the Member States will be the main policy output. Supported by DG EMPL, structural reforms and investments in the Member States in the areas of equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion as well as social innovation will contribute to the attainment of this specific objective. A special focus will be put on addressing the social consequences of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and of the transition towards a fair and inclusive climate neutral and digital economy.

DG EMPL will take part in the debate on the future of the European Semester in the different dimensions it may take, considering the policy initiatives set out in the 'Next Generation EU' strategy for the recovery after the outbreak of COVID-19. In particular, the introduction of the Recovery and Resilience Facility will entail new procedural steps, including the presentation of national recovery and resilience plans, their assessment by the Commission and monitoring of progress made on agreed milestones and targets. DG EMPL will provide guidance, support and knowledge on employment, skills and social issues, as well as assessment of social and distributional impact of reforms in other domains. To strengthen ownership in Member States, the involvement of social partners and civil society organisations (beyond their already increased engagement over the last years) will be key. A possible revision of the social scoreboard to keep it up-to-date with the recent challenges and reinforce the monitoring of the European Pillar of Social Rights could also be envisaged.

The attainment of this specific objective will be measured with an indicator on the *Level of implementation of the employment and social policy components of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), based on a disaggregation by priorities of each CSR*. To this end, DG EMPL will rely on the CeSaR platform which is used to assess the degree of progress on CSRs (both annually and multiannually).

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

The UN Sustainable Development Goals will be further integrated in the European Semester while ensuring consistency with the other relevant institutional frameworks, notably the European Pillar of Social Rights.

## Specific objective 3.2: Stronger social dialogue

Social dialogue is a tool for negotiation and consensus building among the tripartite actors from the world of work: governments, worker and employer organizations. Evidence shows that social dialogue, underpinned by the fundamental principles and rights at work, can foster socio-economic progress and be a governance instrument for sustainable development establishing a joint understanding of the challenges and the way to address them.

Social dialogue is deeply embedded in the European Pillar of Social Rights (principle 8 ‘Social dialogue and involvement of workers’) as well as in the 2020-2024 strategy of the Commission. This starts with the political guidelines where President Ursula von der Leyen stressed her commitment to social dialogue (‘I am a firm believer in the value of social dialogue between employers and unions’), and cascades down to the mission letter of Executive-Vicepresident Dombrovskis where she states ‘I want you to prioritise the relationship with the social partners and lead the work on strengthening the role of social dialogue at European level. You will help prepare the Tripartite Social Summit.’ and of Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, that reads ‘You should promote social dialogue and engage with social partners at the EU level across all of our priorities.’

Promoting social dialogue is a legal obligation for the Commission based on Article 154 of the TFEU. It also supports the quality and acceptance of new EU policy initiatives in the social and employment field. The outbreak of COVID-19 and its economic and social consequences only confirm the importance of a strong social dialogue.

Two indicators are linked to this specific objective and measure the (1) *Share of the EU workforce covered by sectoral social dialogue committees* and (2) *Social dialogue outcomes*. The sectoral social dialogue will be reviewed in 2021.

To build on the momentum created by the *New Start for Social Dialogue* process launched in 2015, DG EMPL will focus in the 2020-2024 period on the following key actions:

- strengthening the involvement of social partners in EU policy and law-making across social and employment policy and other relevant policy areas where an initiative may have social and employment consequences;
- supporting the EU level social dialogue at cross-industry and sector level by facilitating the development of bipartite products, such as social partner agreements, seeking further synergies in the work carried out by the sectoral social partners and providing financial support;
- contributing to strengthening social dialogue at national level by analysing related challenges through the European Semester process;
- contributing to focus the attention to the functioning and effectiveness of industrial relations by contributing to the annual *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* report, supervising Eurofound's activities as well as by promoting the involvement of social partners in international fora (ILO, G20) and external relations (notably enlargement, neighbourhood, linkage between trade and working conditions abroad).

The Commission can provide policy steer to encourage Member States to reinforce the role of national social partners in countries where their capacity remains insufficient.. In this context, DG EMPL will consider an initiative on social dialogue and collective bargaining.

In line with Article 154 of the TFEU, the Commission must conduct a two stage consultation of European social partners before submitting proposals in certain social policy fields. The process and requirements for such social partner consultations as well as for agreements negotiated by social partners are set out in the Better Regulation Toolbox 11 on social partner initiatives<sup>8</sup>.

Social dialogue will continue to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to 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'.

### **Specific objective 3.3: Decent and safe working conditions for all**

#### **A. Decent working conditions for all**

The world of work is rapidly evolving, with new occupations and forms of organisation gaining importance. While more people are working than in the last two decades, not everybody is benefiting from economic growth. The share of people earning low wages has increased while in-work poverty is rising in many parts of Europe. To address this, President von der Leyen has committed to present a legal instrument to ensure that all the workers in the EU have a fair minimum wage which should allow for a decent living wherever they work. This will support further the implementation of principle 6 'Wages' of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Possible indexes to monitor the implementation of the initiative may include, inter alia, the in-work poverty, the level of the minimum wage and its change relative to prices and other wages, the number of workers earning the statutory minimum wage or collectively agreed wage floors. These will be specified in the monitoring framework of the initiative.

The EU initiative on the minimum wage will be carried out in accordance with Article 154 of the TFEU. A two-stage consultation to social partners will be conducted, supported by an analytical document accompanying the second phase consultation. In case of no negotiation between the social partners, DG EMPL will undertake an impact assessment with a view to support a Commission proposal. Enforcement actions will be defined in the legal instrument.

Furthermore, preparations are currently ongoing for the transposition of Directive 1152/2019 on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions in 2020-2021 with the support of an

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<sup>8</sup> <https://europa.eu/Cu93NU>



expert group composed of Member States and EFTA/EEA country experts, with the participation of EU level Social Partners. The Directive sets new rights for workers addressing particularly the insufficient protection for workers in more precarious jobs, while limiting burdens on employers and maintaining labour market adaptability.

In addition, DG EMPL will continue to update the website on jurisprudence on working time<sup>9</sup> to ensure it is accessible and taken into account in the Member States. It will also support a network of labour law experts in each Member State and EFTA/EEA country, through which monthly reports on developments in national labour law and jurisprudence will be published and an annual conference on labour law organised. Clarifying the exact scope of the provisions and of the derogations permitted will help reduce non-conformity and abuses, and thus safely and properly address more flexible forms of work, as well as alleviate administrative burden by decreasing the need for successive changes to national, regional or local legal texts and to established patterns of work organisation.

The Commission will organise communication events around the fair minimum wages initiative. The communication activities related to the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights will also contribute to the visibility of this initiative.

The EU initiative on minimum wage will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

## **B. Safe working conditions for all**

Besides the initiative on minimum wage, the development of legislative and non-legislative initiatives aiming at improving the health and safety of workers in EU will also contribute to this specific objective.

Indicators on monitoring EU law will provide the necessary information on the progress.

The key policy outputs in this regard will be the revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive 2004/37 and the adoption of a new EU Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework for the period post-2020 which will take into account the lessons learned from the evaluation of the current Framework and address new risks, including psychosocial risks, alongside more traditional ones such as exposure to dangerous substances and risk of accidents at work. This is particularly important in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic as workplaces will require enhanced safety procedures to ensure the protection of citizens at work.

Several tools such as public consultation, stakeholders consultation through the tripartite Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work or impact assessment will be used to support the development of these initiatives.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://europa.eu/!gx67Ng>

Actions will be taken to promote implementation and enforcement of EU Occupational and Safety and Health Directives in the Member States, in particular through exchanges in the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee and the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work, as well as by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

Enforcement of the EU legislation on individual and collective rights will be ensured by the monitoring of complaints and the launch, as appropriate, of infringement procedures. This would have a particular importance in the coming years, given the negative socio-economic consequences of the health crisis. The effective implementation of the directives on information of consultation of workers will notably be essential in the context of restructuring processes.

A dedicated sub-group of Directors-General for Industrial Relations will consider recent case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU in the field of working time in October 2020.

In general, transposition and conformity checks are carried out on a regular basis as soon as the deadline for transposition is reached.

Overall, the attainment of the specific objective on ‘Decent and safe working conditions for all’ will be measured by an indicator looking at the *Percentage of complaints, EU Pilot and Infringement procedures handled within Commission benchmarks*.

All the initiatives related to improving the health and safety of workers in the EU will be supported by communication activities to raise awareness and provide information on good practices, in particular by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

The initiatives aiming at improving the health and safety at work will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 3 ‘Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages’.

Overall, this specific objective will support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular the principles related to fair working conditions (5-10).

### **Specific objective 3.4: Better functioning labour markets**

Significant challenges lie ahead, notably linked to a global economic slowdown due to Brexit and the COVID-19 crisis.

Unemployment is very high in some Member States and, as underlined in the Spring 2020 European Economic Forecast, will increase further as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Inequalities persist and regional disparities within countries have increased.

Despite the labour market recovery from the last financial crisis, the youth unemployment rate in the EU is still more than double compared to the overall rate for the active population and significant differences remain between and within Member States. Gains in employment have not been evenly distributed among Member States and regions, and certain groups of

the young population are at a disproportionate disadvantage (e.g. those with low skills, migrant backgrounds, living in rural areas or belonging to ethnic minorities such as Roma).

The transition to climate-neutrality and digitalisation have a significant impact on the labour markets. Job growth is expected to be concentrated in green(ing) sectors, both in industry and services, while job losses are expected to occur in carbon intensive sectors. New technologies will generate new job opportunities and allow for more flexible work arrangements, but new jobs should also be of high quality and people should be equipped with the right skills to take them up. Services provided via online platforms have, for example, opened up new opportunities for labour such as flexibility for working time. However, there is growing uncertainty on a number of issues related to platform-based work.

Using the green and digital transformations to empower industry and small and medium-sized enterprises in line with the New Industrial Strategy and the SME strategy, and supporting key industrial ecosystems, will require increasing the labour market relevance of education and training, providing the right guidance to people and supporting them to successfully manage professional transitions. In this context, the DG EMPL will work towards maximising employment and making labour markets more resilient, more inclusive and more sustainable.

This objective will be backed financially by the ESF+ which will support the policy-making process and finance projects helping people get into work. Four indicators are established in relation to the coverage and effects of the relevant ESF+ interventions, looking at the (1) *Participants (unemployed and inactive) in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention*, (2) *Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention*, (3) *Unemployed, including long-term unemployed, participants supported by the ESF+ shared management* and (4) *Young people below 30 years of age supported by the ESF+ shared management*.

In addition, EGF will provide support to workers made redundant as a result of significant restructuring and will measure the progress towards the achievement of this specific objective through the indicator (5) *Percentage of EGF beneficiaries in employment and self-employed six months after the end of the implementing period*.

The key policy outputs will be linked to the Youth Guarantee, the transition to climate-neutrality and digitalisation, platform workers and a permanent instrument to mitigate unemployment risks in emergency situations.

To step up the fight against youth unemployment, the Commission will present its proposal to reinforce the Youth Guarantee that already helps 3.5 million young people each year to get in training, education or work. The reinforced Youth Guarantee will reach out to young people, supporting them in developing skills and gaining work experience, in particular those relevant to the green and digital transitions.

DG EMPL also intends to support the Member States in preserving their capacity to support employment and income through a permanent instrument for the reinsurance of unemployment benefits.

In order to respond to the new labour market challenges related to climate change, digitalisation and COVID-19 outbreak, DG EMPL will also further promote: the development of Active Labour Market Policies, the improvement of capacities and performance of Public Employment Services, addressing persisting long-term unemployment, and initiatives in favour of quality traineeships.

Moreover, DG EMPL will continue monitoring the impact of digitalisation on labour markets, including developments related to artificial intelligence and its impact on working conditions (algorithmic management), skills and inequality, and the forthcoming European Data Strategy.

The sustainable growth of the new platform economy requires improved working conditions for platform workers. The Commission will explore priority issues and possible solutions on, for example, employment status, working conditions and access to social protection of platform workers, access to collective representation and bargaining, algorithmic management, as well as cross-border aspects of platform work.

Applying better regulation to the funds, the Commission is currently carrying out the evaluation of the ESF support provided from 2014 until 2018 for youth employment, employment at large and labour mobility, social inclusion and education and training. The lessons learned will feed the remaining period of implementation of the ESF and support the negotiation of the future programmes. The first evaluation related to youth employment will be available at the end of 2020 and will be followed by the remaining topics.

In parallel, the Commission is carrying out the ex post evaluation of the EGF for the period 2014-2020. The aim of the evaluation is to scrutinize the effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value of the EGF. The evaluation will be completed by 31 December 2021. The findings will guide the implementation of the EGF post-2020 and will be taken into account in the review of the future EGF.

The work on the initiatives aforementioned will be promoted through media announcements.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, 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'.

Overall, this specific objective will support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular principle 4 'Active support to employment', the principles related to fair working conditions (5-10) and principle 13 'Unemployment benefits'.

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

In line with the European Pillar of Social Rights, this objective aims to achieve greater social fairness through dedicated actions that fight poverty, inequality and social exclusion. It also includes promoting more effective social protection systems through increased focus on certain groups, such as homeless, the elderly and children.

To this end, four indicators will monitor the progress towards the achievement of this objective, as follows: (1) *Number of persons with a foreign background and minorities (including marginalised communities such as Roma) reached by the ESF+ shared management*, (2) *Participants above 54 years old reached by the ESF+ shared management*, (3) *Number of persons receiving food and material support from the ESF+ shared management* and (4) *Number of children under 18 receiving food and material support from the ESF+ shared management*.

In the period 2020-2024, DG EMPL will pursue several key policy outputs in the area of social inclusion and social protection, notably:

- ✓ a European Child Guarantee to fight child poverty, pursue equal opportunities and help ensure that vulnerable children have access to basic services;
- ✓ contribution to the adoption of a Green Paper on Ageing to launch a debate on long-term impacts, notably care and pensions, and how to foster active ageing;
- ✓ making full use of the available mechanisms to support the Member States in implementing the Pillar:
  - analytical and policy contribution in the area of social affairs in the European Semester;
  - support for the policy work of the Social Protection Committee as a preparatory body for the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, including development of benchmarking, peer reviews and thematic reviews.
  - elaboration of reports together with the Member States on, for example, pensions adequacy and long-term care, to underpin further policy work including a possible initiative on long-term care; this possible initiative became even more important as the COVID-19 crisis brought forward the structural challenges faced by the long-term care systems;
  - support for innovation and experimentation in the area of social protection and inclusion policies.

Furthermore, DG EMPL will also explore ways to support the implementation of principle 14 of the European Pillar of Social Rights that calls for adequate minimum income schemes. These have the potential to release the pressure put on households by the lack of or insufficient resources, a challenge that increased sharply with the COVID-19 crisis. A coordinated response on EU level could help reinforce basic social safety nets in the Member States so that no one falls through and provide for some minimum level of reassurance for the population.

Lack or insufficient income often leads to inability to meet rent and mortgage payments which increases the risk of household eviction and, consequently, the number of homeless persons. Before the COVID-19 crisis, on any given night, some 700 000 persons slept in the streets or in emergency shelters across the EU. This number is expected to further increase if no decisive action is taken. Therefore, DG EMPL also considers promoting a European platform of cooperation on homelessness to assist Member States in tackling the most extreme form of poverty and social exclusion which limits access to education, employment and other social services.

Events will be organised to present the initiatives once adopted, such as the European Child Guarantee.

DG EMPL currently conducts an evaluation of the ESF support provided from 2014 until 2018, notably for social inclusion. The lessons learned will feed the remaining period of implementation of the ESF and support the negotiation of the future programmes. The evaluation related to social inclusion will be finalised in 2021.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 1 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere', goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong 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'. The European Child Guarantee will contribute to goals targeting child poverty and wellbeing.

Overall, this specific objective will support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular the principles related to social protection and inclusion (11-20).

### **Specific objective 3.6: Enhanced labour mobility**

At the end of 2018, more than 13.7 million Europeans lived or worked in a Member State other than that of their nationality, representing 2.6% of the EU population<sup>10</sup>.

While there is still a broad support for free movement among EU citizens<sup>11</sup>, intra-EU labour mobility has come under substantial pressure and uncertainty following recent developments at both EU (e.g. BREXIT) and global level (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic). Thus, the future trends might show a decrease of the length for the so-called 'mobility spells', the period of stay for EU movers in another EU Member State than the one of their citizenship, and a further increase of the 'return mobility', EU movers returning to their state of citizenship.

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<sup>10</sup> Figures on EU27 (excluding UK).

<sup>11</sup> <https://europa.eu/!mn36Ud>

In this context, the objective is to promote a model of labour mobility in Europe based on the respect of social rights and on proper and fair conditions of competition between enterprises in the Internal Market, supporting further the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Specific emphasis will be given to mobility trends and pursuing the adequate application and enforcement of the existing extensive legislative framework for free movement of workers.

The role of the cooperation structures established at EU level will be even more important and will require additional consolidation as it is, for instance, the case with the bodies that promote equal treatment and support workers in the EU and their family members<sup>12</sup>.

In the 2020-2024 period, DG EMPL will closely monitor Member States' implementation of the posting of workers Directive (EU) 2018/957, after the transposition deadline of 30 July 2020.

Moreover, DG EMPL will also continue to oversee the establishment and functioning of the European Labour Authority, including the transfer of certain functions and bodies as the EURES Coordination Office. Once fully operational, the Authority will assist Member States and the Commission in their effective application and enforcement of Union law related to labour mobility and the coordination of social security systems within the Union.

Furthermore, DG EMPL will continue to support measures aimed at enhancing the transparency on EU labour markets, including via the EURES portal, thereby enabling workers to take informed decisions on intra-EU mobility. This may include extending the labour market part on the EURES Portal with specific information on seasonal workers, cross-border workers, bottleneck occupations, etc. as well as producing factsheets on specific categories of workers.

The indicator that measures labour mobility is represented through the *Number of placements ensured by the EURES network*, both at national level through the EURES National Coordination Offices and at EU level directly through the EURES portal.

The main outputs for the period 2020-2024 include:

- ✓ institutional agreement between co-legislators for the revision of the social security coordination rules by, for instance, improving rules for all cross-border workers and the tools for the cooperation between Member States;
- ✓ achieve the full implementation of the Electronic Exchange Social Security Information system, i.e ensuring that all 32 participating countries complete the full national implementation and are, therefore, capable for exchanging all relevant business cases and documents;
- ✓ complete set-up and full and seamless integration of the European Labour Authority in the wider context of EU measures facilitating labour mobility.

In cooperation with the European Labour Authority, DG EMPL will use the full potential of the European Employment Services network (EURES), the European Platform tackling undeclared

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<sup>12</sup> <https://europa.eu/!Cm78UF>

work, and other relevant tools to overcome the problems related to seasonal workers, as highlighted in the guidelines on seasonal workers in the EU in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak<sup>13</sup>, as well as developing a communication agenda on the rights and obligations of mobile workers.

DG EMPL will also further reflect on developing a European identification and verification system for the social security coverage of mobile citizens i.e. the so-called European Social Security Number).

In addition, the Electronic Exchange Social Security Information project contributes to simplification and burden reduction by helping social security institutions across the EU to exchange information more rapidly and securely. Therefore, its wide implementation is key for the period. This project will also make it easier to combat fraud and error, as national social security institutions will use standardised electronic documents in their own language, ensuring that the data they exchange is correct and complete.

As for enforcement actions, DG EMPL disposes of special instruments to ensure the proper implementation/enforcement of the social security coordination rules notably via dedicated committees, expert networks and, following the revision, the possibility for implementing delegated acts. The European Labour Authority will help further in this regard.

In regards to better regulation requirements, the revised rules on social security coordination will modernise the current rules to ensure that they are fairer, simpler to apply and easier to enforce; these revised rules contain provisions for proper evaluation.

In accordance with Article 35 of the EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589, by 13 May 2021, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions an ex post evaluation report of the operation and effects of this Regulation. That report may be accompanied by legislative proposals amending this Regulation.

In the field of posting of workers, in accordance with Article 2 of Directive (EU) 2018/957, the Commission shall review the application and implementation of this Directive. By 30 July 2023, the Commission shall submit a report on the application and implementation of this Directive to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and propose, where appropriate, necessary amendments to this Directive and to Directive 96/71/EC.

A wide variety of communication tools (publications, webinars, Q&A, databases, websites, social media activities, animation, videos, etc.) will be used to ensure that the rules and their implications are adequately communicated to the public and the responsible authorities.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://europa.eu/!Fp33pc>



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

The actions in the area of social economy and social enterprises contribute notably to job creation, social impact and inclusive access to labour market, in line with President Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines pointing that 'a sustainable Europe is one that opens up opportunities, innovates and creates jobs'.

Accordingly, the indicator that will measure the progress towards this objective will look into the *Jobs created* and their social impact through support from EaSI Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis and the InvestEU Social Investment and Skills window.

The forthcoming Action Plan for Social Economy to enhance social innovation will present a framework for key actions at EU, national, regional and local level to boost the development of social economy and unlock its potential in Europe for job creation, inclusion and just transitions. This is even more important in the context of the COVID-19 recovery as the social economy offers unique ways to support vulnerable groups such as long-term unemployed, migrants and people with disabilities to find new jobs. It often complements and fills in gaps in the delivery of social and care services. Social economy also supports entrepreneurship and ecosystems as well as social impact business models while promoting a fair, resilient and sustainable socio-economic model benefiting local communities. In this context, the EaSI Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis and the future InvestEU Social Investment and Skills window aim to support inclusive and social entrepreneurship by promoting access to finance to help micro- and social enterprises start up and grow. The action plan will be supported by a dedicated communication strategy.

In line with Article 13(4) of the EaSI Regulation, the Commission will also evaluate the 2014-2020 EaSI programme ex post by December 2022. The results will help improve the 2021-2027 follow-up programmes, i.e. ESF+ and InvestEU.

The ex post evaluation of the EaSI Regulation will also target the European Progress Microfinance Facility in accordance with Article 38(1) of the EaSI Regulation and Article 9 of Council Decision 283/2010. The objective of the Facility is to increase the availability of microcredit for setting up or developing a small business. This evaluation will assess the extent to which it has achieved its objectives while ensuring that the evaluation criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, relevance and EU added value are adequately covered.

As part of its mandate, the European Investment Fund will pursue communication activities to promote EU level instruments for microfinance and social enterprises. Communication activities will also be carried out by contractors under the EaSI advisory support for microfinance and social enterprises. In addition, European networks (e.g. Euclid, EMN, EVPA, MFC) will raise awareness of the EU-level instruments with the help of EU funding.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 1 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere', 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'. They will also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

## **General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world**

The von der Leyen Commission aims to strengthen further the EU's unique brand of responsible global leadership encompassing employment, social affairs and inclusion.

To this end, DG EMPL will indirectly contribute to the implementation of the Commission political guidelines on stronger Europe in the world by ensuring that every new free trade agreement contains the highest standards of labour protection and that labour provisions in existing trade agreements and the Generalised System of Preferences are effectively monitored and enforced.

Moreover, DG EMPL will contribute to the future EU-UK partnership through the level playing field provisions on social and labour protection and their effective implementation, and through social security coordination rules. DG EMPL will also continue to monitor the implementation and enforcement of Part II of the Withdrawal Agreement on citizens' rights.

Furthermore, DG EMPL will update and enhance the EU's support for promoting decent work in the world in cooperation with relevant Commission services and EEAS. This will cover enhancing the impact of the social dimension in global supply chains, including announced legislative initiatives on due diligence, the implementation of the Commission's zero-tolerance policy on child labour, global and bilateral outreach on future of work and, where relevant, the roll-out of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

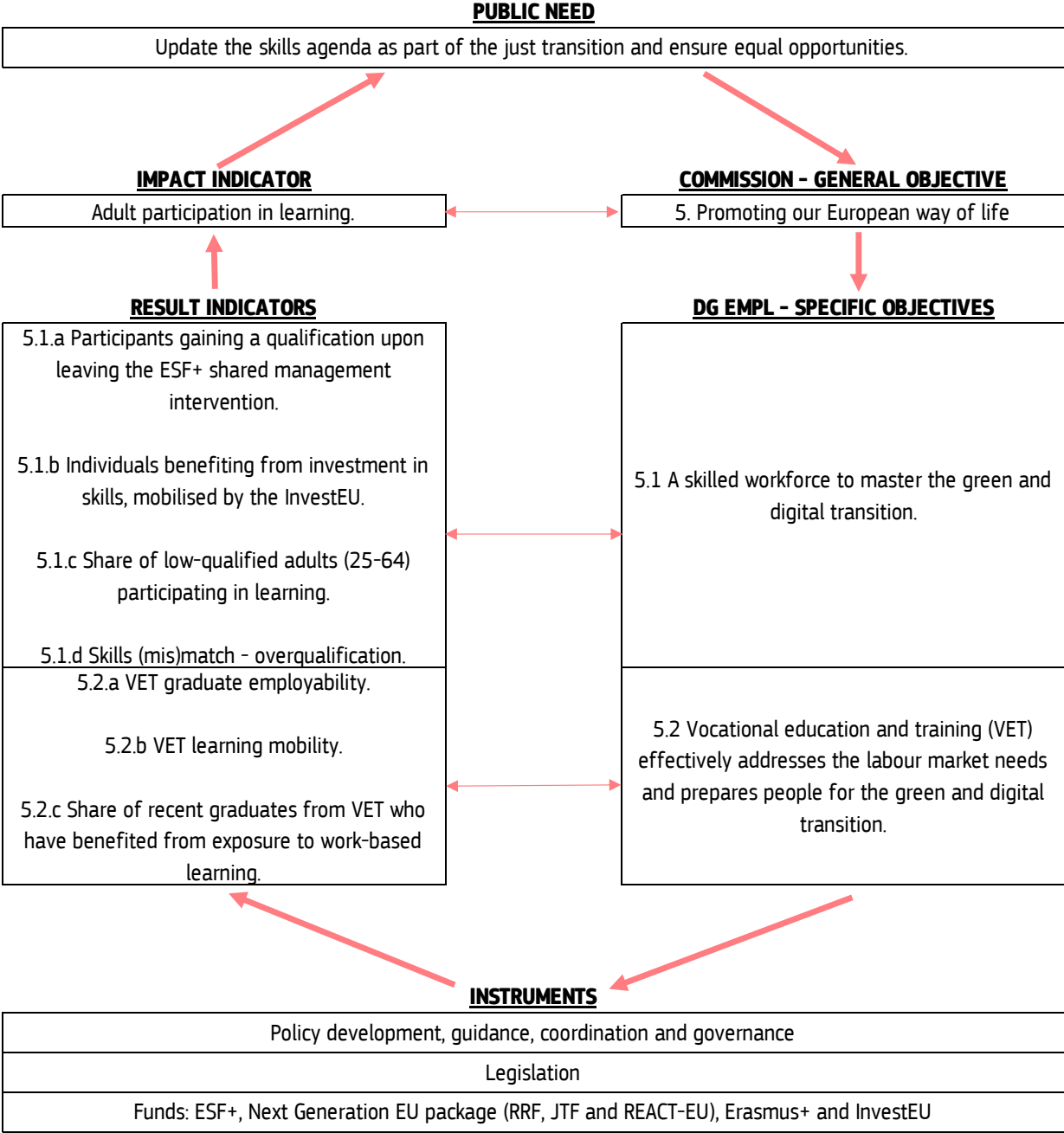
In terms of relations with international organisations, DG EMPL will implement the EU support for multilateralism by contributing to a strong and effective EU voice within the ILO tripartite meetings and by cooperating with its office. In addition, DG EMPL will ensure the EU impact within the G20, G7, OECD and, where relevant, in the UN, in particular in relation to the implementation of the social and employment UN Sustainable Development Goals.

DG EMPL will also support further the social and economic reforms in the Western Balkans through the Economic Reform Programmes, the annual ministerial meeting, strengthening the regional cooperation in the region and the roll-out of the EU acquis.

## **General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life**

Education and training is a paramount pillar of the European society. Despite the progress made so far, employers still report difficulties in finding candidates with the right skills or work experience. In the third quarter of 2019, the vacancy rate stood at 2.3% in the EU, the highest level registered since 2006, while the rate of adult participation in learning was only 11.1% at end 2018. Therefore, it is crucial to continue investing in education and training and ensure that all have access to up and reskilling opportunities, especially in the current context as recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak will also entail reintegration in the labour market of those who lost their jobs.

For this purpose, DG EMPL will support the up-skilling and re-skilling of the workforce and the vocational education and training sector to strive in the green and digital transition, as illustrated in the below logic of intervention and detailed in the following sections:



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

This objective targets to boost the access to and take up of upskilling and reskilling in the EU to support the green and digital transitions. To track the progress made towards the attainment of this objective, DG EMPL proposes four indicators looking at the: (1) *Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving the ESF+ interventions*, (2) *Individuals benefiting from investments in skills, mobilised by InvestEU*, (3) *Share of low-qualified adults (aged 25-64)* and (4) *Skills (mis)match – overqualification*.

A key output for this objective will be the Communication on an updated Skills Agenda and its accompanying actions, including the proposal for a Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training for a fair, sustainable and resilient Europe. The COVID-19 outbreak emphasised the urgency of stepping up efforts to ensure that upskilling and reskilling opportunities play their part in a sustainable recovery. Flagship initiatives of the updated Skills Agenda will include:

- ✓ the launch of a Pact for Skills that calls for mobilising all key stakeholders to take concrete action and ensure adequate funding while recognising that Europe's working age population will need to continuously upskill and reskill to maintain the competitiveness of its economies and to address the challenges of the digital and green transition;
- ✓ a Skills Insight mechanism to develop improved skills intelligence and present it in tailored, user-friendly formats. The goal is to support better informed upskilling and reskilling decisions, both by individuals on study, training and work, as well as by companies and public authorities investing in training;
- ✓ the development of European Standards for micro-credentials to support the quality, transparency and portability of this approach for capturing the results of targeted short courses, typically helping people quickly develop specialist skills or master new technologies.

Pending the results of a forthcoming impact assessment, another key output could be the initiative on Individual Learning Accounts to encourage individuals to polish their knowledge, skills and competences. It will empower individuals to use their entitlements to prepare for professional transition to new occupations or sectors.

The Commission is currently carrying out the evaluation of the ESF support provided from 2014 until 2018, notably for education and training. The lessons learned will feed the remaining period of implementation of the ESF and support the negotiation of the future programmes. The evaluation related to education and training will be available in 2021.

The evaluation report for the 2016 Council Recommendation on Upskilling pathways will provide clear guidelines as to the areas for improvements to increase impact.

The communication actions around the launch of the reinforced Skills Agenda and the proposal for a Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training will focus on skills for the green and digital transitions and the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

The main communication channel for this objective is the European Vocational Skills Week which reaches out to a large number of people and organisations across and beyond the EU. In addition, the launch of the new Europass platform will benefit from a Social Media campaign in association with the National Europass Centres. The Commission's corporate communication actions on digital will also contribute to enhance the visibility of the Skills Agenda and Europass.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong 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'. They will also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, (principle 1 'Education, training and life-long learning' and 4 'Active support to employment').

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

This value added and value enabling objective aims at putting in place an EU policy on vocational education and training (VET) that will ensure this sector caters for the skills needs of both the young and adult population in a lifelong learning perspective, and equips them with the skills needed for swift responses to changing labour market needs, especially those required for the twin green and digital transitions.

The COVID-19 crisis is expected to have an impact on the availability of work based learning and apprenticeship placements, while also accelerating the digitalisation in VET, building on the momentum and mobilisation triggered by the immediate switch to remote learning.

The proposed three indicators for measuring progress are also embedded in the Commission proposal for a VET Recommendation and look at the: (1) *VET graduate employability*, (2) *VET learning mobility* and (3) *Share of recent graduates from VET who have benefited from exposure to work-based learning*.

The key outputs that will contribute to this specific objective include a proposal for a Council Recommendation for VET for a fair, sustainable and resilient Europe. This proposal will integrate key elements of two recommendations (Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality Assurance in VET and Council Recommendation on a European credit system for VET) and will repeal these; it will call for measures to innovate and modernise VET, notably in terms of new learning environments, digital tools and pedagogics.

Another key output will consist in the gradual establishment of Centers of Vocational excellence to be world-class reference points for both initial training of young people as well as for continuing upskilling and reskilling of adults. These will support entrepreneurial initiatives and act as knowledge and innovation hubs for companies, in particular for SMEs.

The European Vocational Skills Week is an excellent communication channel both within Europe and outside its borders and will focus in 2020 on the theme 'VET Excellence for Green and Digital Transitions', providing a unique forum to communicate the measure being taken by the VET sector in these areas. For the subsequent years the theme will be aligned with the key policy priorities of the Commission.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong 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’. They will also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, (principle 1 ‘Education, training and life-long learning’ and 4 ‘Active support to employment’).

**General objective 6: A new push for European democracy**

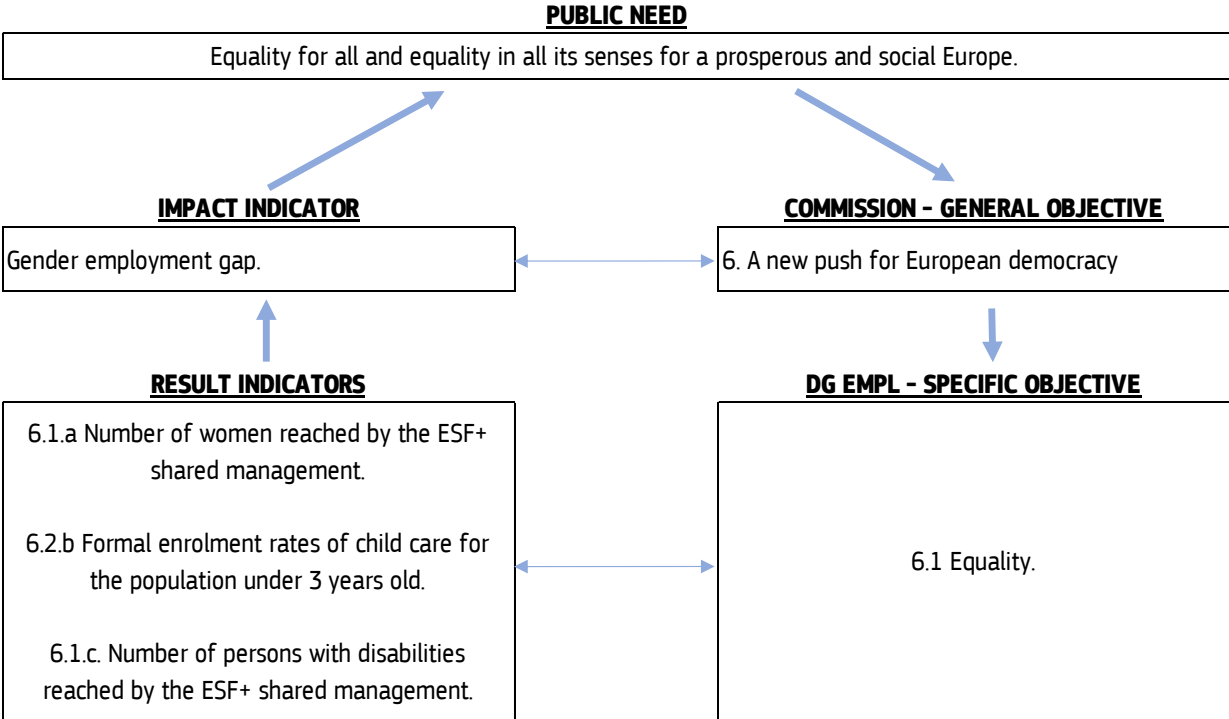
Equality is one of the fundamental values of the European democracy. Further progress in this area can best be achieved if the diversity of assets, talents and potential of European society is fully activated and explored.

Moreover, all those who have similar aspirations should be given the same opportunities.

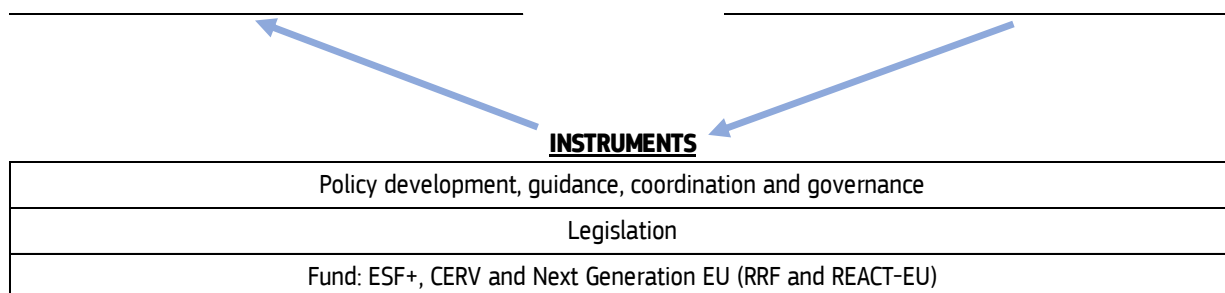
However, this is not yet the case as, for instance, the gender employment gap<sup>14</sup> was at 11.6% in 2018. This shows that EU needs to do more in ensuring that women have access to the same job conditions as men and are not discriminated on the labour market.

Equality for all and equality in all its senses is a major priority for the Commission and is part of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The logic of intervention of DG EMPL is presented below and detailed in the following section:



<sup>14</sup> Measures the differences between men and women’s employment rate (aged 20 to 64) in percentage points.



## Specific objective 6.1: Equality

This objective aims to support and complement activities of Member States with regard to closing the employment, pay and pension gaps in order to achieve equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and the new Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025<sup>15</sup>.

It also aims to pursue economic and social inclusion for persons with disabilities, free them from discrimination and ensure full respect for their rights in EU.

Achieving this specific objective will be measured by DG EMPL with three indicators: (1) *Number of women reached by the ESF+ shared management*, (2) *Formal enrolment rates of child care for the population under 3 years old* and (3) *Number of persons with disabilities reached by the ESF+ shared management*.

The ESF+ intervention targets fair treatment and (re)integration of women and persons with disabilities on the labour market through different types of support such as education and training programs. The enrolment of children in formal care arrangements will enable women to share their family related responsibilities and, therefore, free time for professional activities.

For this purpose, DG EMPL's key outputs include:

- ✓ monitoring gender equality on the labour market in the European Semester process and through the Social Scoreboard, including income inequalities;
- ✓ mainstreaming the gender perspective in DG EMPL key initiatives, i.e. the Action plan for the Social Pillar, the Skills Agenda, a proposal for a Council Recommendation on VET, a reinforced Youth Guarantee and an initiative on minimum wage;
- ✓ re-launching the discussions with social partners on how to improve gender equality in the world of work and encourage them to intensify efforts in addressing the gender employment and pay gaps;
- ✓ in the 2021 edition of the *Pension Adequacy Report*, assessing together with the Social Protection Committee how risks and resources are shared in pension systems between women and men;

<sup>15</sup> <https://europa.eu/!QR89gN>

- ✓ exploring with the Member States and other stakeholders the provision of pension credits for care-related career breaks in occupational pension schemes;
- ✓ supporting Member States' efforts in improving the availability and affordability of quality care services for children and other dependants, with finances from the ESF+ and the InvestEU Programme;
- ✓ present a strengthened Disability Strategy at EU level to complement and support national efforts to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD);
- ✓ publishing in 2021 a joint Commission - Social Protection Committee report on long-term care, which will underpin further policy work including via the European Semester and a possible initiative on long-term care;
- ✓ developing a set of indicators to monitor the Work-Life Balance Directive;
- ✓ contributing to the Report on the Impacts of Demographic Change<sup>16</sup> published on 17 June 2020 and to the Green Paper on Ageing, planned for 2021; notably, by taking into account the strong gender dimension in long-term care.

DG EMPL will also ensure full transposition of the European Accessibility Act on the accessibility requirements of products and services (EU directive 2019/882). It will also continue monitoring the implementation of the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC which prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion and belief, age, disability and sexual orientation in the field of employment. In 2021, DG EMPL will prepare a report on the implementation of the directive in the past five years. The report will cover also the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC, under the remit of DG Justice.

The Commission is currently carrying out the evaluation of the Disability Strategy for 2010-2020, to be completed in 2020.

DG EMPL participates in and contributes to the work of the Commission Task Force on Equality, with its secretariat based in the Secretariat-General and composed of representatives of all services and the EEAS, which has as its role to ensure mainstreaming of equality aspects across the Commission, including aspects covered by this Strategic Plan. It complements the work of the UNCRPD Focal Point settled in DG EMPL and contributes to a Union of equality as outlined in the political guidelines of President von der Leyen.

Communication campaigns will be pursued for the launch of the new European Disability Strategy. Moreover, several awareness-raising actions will be carried out on the living conditions of persons with disabilities, the challenges they encounter and tools to improve their lives.

These initiatives will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, to goal 5 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. They will also support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, (principle 2 'Gender equality', 3 'Equal opportunities' and 17 'Inclusion of people with disabilities').

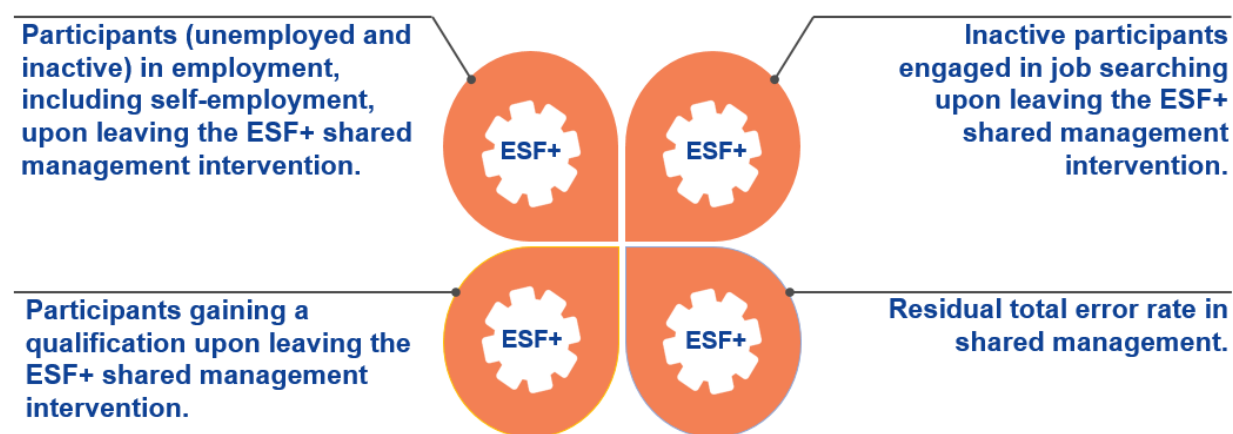
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<sup>16</sup> <https://europa.eu/!Pj39Yv>



## D. Key performance indicators

From the list of indicators presented in the annex, the following four present the key performance of DG EMPL:



## E. Managing funds towards delivery of policy results

The specific objectives presented in section C above refer to DG EMPL's contribution to the delivery of the headline ambitions of the President von der Leyen's political agenda. Many indicators linked to them result from the implementation of the funds managed by DG EMPL.

Since the largest part of these funds is implemented through shared management with the Member States on which the DG has limited control, DG EMPL has developed a **monitoring framework around three operational objectives related to shared management**. This framework further defines key priorities and actions which can positively contribute to the delivery of policy results, thus enhancing the policy performance. These are:

- ✓ negotiating the legislative framework for the post-2020 operational programmes;
- ✓ steering Member States' programming based on performance and results to deliver on EU policy objectives; from this perspective, DG EMPL ensures that the operational programmes continue to address the priorities set in the Partnership Agreements and, where necessary, adapt to emerging challenges;
- ✓ providing effective support to the Member States in their implementation of the funds and better communication of results; this priority entails active monitoring, gathering evaluation evidence from Member States, promoting the use of counterfactual impact evaluations and improving macro econometric models, and communicating through annual summary reports<sup>17</sup> and open data platform<sup>18</sup>;
- ✓ protecting the EU budget and minimising the risk of fraud.

The **ESF 2014–2020 ex post evaluation** is planned to start in 2022 and end by 2024.

<sup>17</sup> <https://europa.eu/!fb43Mg>

<sup>18</sup> <https://europa.eu/!FJ99yV>

## PART 2. Modernising the administration

Besides the six general objectives set in the political guidelines of President von der Leyen to which DG EMPL contributes as presented in section C above, the Commission also targets to adjust its internal procedures and processes **towards a more ‘modern, high-performing and sustainable’** institution, which constitutes the seventh general objective of the Commission. The lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis for the organisation of work in the Commission will be addressed in this context.

As a modern public administration, the Commission implements an internal control framework inspired by the highest international standards. The Commission’s system covers all the principles of internal control identified in the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission 2013 Internal Control framework, including financial control, risk management, human resource management, communication and the safeguarding and protection of information. **DG EMPL has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances, and regularly assesses its implementation and overall functioning.** This assessment is based on indicators, the most strategic of which are listed in this section of the strategic plan.

### A. Human resource management

In the overall context of decreasing staff, the alignment of human resources with priorities remains a key challenge for DG EMPL over the coming years. To this end, as well as to improve the efficiency of the DG and its capacity to play its key role in the delivery of Commission priorities, **preparatory steps for a reorganisation started in 2020.**

DG EMPL will continue to **carefully screen all vacant posts**, followed by redeployment where appropriate, and to **align the contracts to the level of responsibilities**, as part of its retention policy. This will be backed by an increasing use of HR monitoring tools to support management decisions on staff allocations.

In line with the corporate Talent Management Strategy, **learning and development activities** will continue to ensure that DG EMPL’ staff have the knowledge and skills to do their job effectively and the flexibility to adapt, as well as to work together in networks across the Commission and with outside partners. To this end, **local learning actions** will be designed in close cooperation with operational services, focusing in particular on the following: enhancing knowledge in DG EMPL’s policy areas, improving horizontal skills, integrating new staff and providing current staff with new perspectives, research and insights from external stakeholders.

With the **female representation in middle management** largely exceeding 50% (56% in 2019), DG EMPL contributes substantially to gender equality of management in the Commission. Still, female colleagues with management potential will continue to be identified and encouraged to develop their management skills.

**Mobility** is a key tool in order to adapt staff allocation to changing priorities, to provide career opportunities and avoid keeping staff too long on sensitive posts. Within the corporate policy, a personalised approach will be applied based on both the interest of the service and the career aspirations of staff. To facilitate mobility within the DG, the systematic publication of EMPL vacant posts on the intranet will continue, as well as personalised advice on job opportunities in the DG, at staff request.

**Engagement and well-being** of staff are key factors for delivery of results. Considering the key role of managers in ensuring a high level of staff engagement, particular attention will be paid to the improvement of people management skills, through training and coaching. Increasing staff engagement and well-being also requires that managers increase their awareness of HR matters and that they place HR issues at the top of their priorities.

Implementation of the **Commission strategy for Diversity and Inclusion** will also contribute to an increased level of staff engagement, through working conditions and arrangements to help all colleagues to reconcile work and private life.

Effective **internal communication** has a fundamental importance in supporting the achievement of all objectives described above. DG EMPL Intranet with a dedicated 'HR Corner' and 'focus on' sections remains a crucial tool in this context as well as the internal newsletter including HR news. DG EMPL's top management is also very active in communicating with the staff, for example, during staff forums organised after the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council where it debriefs staff on the major political conclusions impacting their work or puts DG EMPL's work into broader Commission perspectives. This type of internal communication activity is very welcome by staff and will be continued.

In order to ensure the effective management of human resources and to optimise the capacity to deliver on priorities in this strategic plan, DG EMPL will develop a local HR strategy with a medium to long-term outlook (3–5 years), consistent with the overall corporate HR strategy.

## **B. Sound financial management**

In accordance with Article 33 and 74 of the Financial Regulation, DG EMPL manages procedures, contracts, grant agreements and contribution agreements having in mind the **principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness**; it exercises financial and procedural controls in order to prevent errors and irregularities before the authorisation of operations.

DG EMPL will continue **to improve its internal processes** to manage calls for proposals and procurement procedures, as well as its process to handle cost claims and invoices in order to provide timely responses to applicants and swift payments to beneficiaries and suppliers. For this purpose, DG EMPL will continue to **update its monitoring tools, workflows, procedures, guidelines, templates and check-lists** available to the staff

dealing with financial issues and continue to **complement financial training** available centrally with sessions customised to the specificities of the DG.

DG EMPL will gradually **adopt various corporate tools** such as: E-grant (full life-cycle management of grant proposals) that will be adopted for the calls for proposals under the next multiannual financial framework, PPMT (Procurement Process Management Tool) and SUMMA (accounting system) as soon as the various modules become available.

As regards **internal control**, DG EMPL has set up processes for each management mode and programming period. These aim to ensure the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of its programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned. The objective is **to ensure that the estimated residual risk of error remains under the materiality threshold of 2%**.

The **2014-2020 Commission audit strategy** assurance building process for ESF and FEAD is based on audits to verify the reliance that can be placed upon the work of national audit authorities. The main objective of these audits is to **confirm that no serious system deficiency remained undetected or unreported by Audit Authorities and that the reported audit opinions and residual error rates in relation to expenditure included in the annual programmes' accounts are reliable for shared management**.

The **2021-2027 management and control system** foreseen in the proposed Regulation remains the same in regards to the financial management of the funds in shared management. DG EMPL will continue performing **compliance audits** which will primarily focus on the re-performance of audits of operations at the level of Audit Authorities and on the spot at the level of final beneficiaries, depending on the risks identified. Compliance audits support DG EMPL's Audit Directorate when assessing whether the audit opinion and residual error rates provided by the Audit Authority are considered reliable and can be used by the Commission for its own assurance. DG EMPL's will also carry out **thematic/targeted audits for programmes and risk areas not sufficiently covered by the Audit Authorities or for which insufficient assurance has been obtained through desk work**.

To mitigate the inherent risk mentioned above, DG EMPL will continue to **deliver administrative capacity-building actions to the national authorities**. It will provide early guidance and training to programme authorities and, in particular, to Audit Authorities, to ensure the implementation of a stable and harmonised audit framework respecting high quality standards.

The detection of serious system deficiencies or irregularities immediately triggers the **interruption of the legal deadline** for executing the related interim payments or the **suspension of payments** to all or part of the affected operational programme. Interruptions and suspensions are only terminated on the basis of reasonable assurance on the implementation of an action plan including corrective measures and/or after financial corrections have been implemented.

Other financial programmes of DG EMPL (direct and indirect management and the European Globalisation Fund) are also covered by audits of grants, an **annual audit plan being determined on a risk-based approach**.

### C. Fraud risk management

DG EMPL will **implement the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy adopted in 2019 through its local strategies** (one for direct management and one for shared management, which is shared with DGs REGIO and MARE) that were reviewed in the same year. The main actions to be taken are:

- ✓ Reinforcing the 'tone-from-the-top' by emphasising the anti-fraud policy and anti-fraud measures in relevant publications in order to generate a deterrent effect and by highlighting the whistleblowing/whistleblower-protection mechanisms;
- ✓ (In-house) Developing search tools for identifying double funding and ensure that they are compatible/interoperable with the future SUMMUM tool, implementing the use of IT tools that detect plagiarism such as URKUND and examine the possibility to load details of previous EU projects / contracts into URKUND so that it can detect plagiarism from such sources as well and consider the use of or links with SEDIA (Single Electronic Data Interchange Area) and providing access to auditors and to financial actors to the Commission Financial and Transparency System, ARACHNE and similar IT tools that provide information on the sources of financing;
- ✓ (Shared management) Increasing the use by Member States authorities of dedicated IT tools to prevent and detect potential fraud and conflicts of interests, for example by advocating the systematic use of ARACHNE or alternative data-mining tools available at national level and encouraging Member States to use exclusion databases such as EDES when selecting beneficiaries of their programmes;
- ✓ Reviewing and updating the Training and Exchanges of Experience regarding OLAF-related procedures and the use of IT tools for detecting suspicious circumstances and know-how on how to spot forgeries by the members of evaluation committees / selection panels by carrying out a Training-needs assessment and organising feedback and assessment of utility and effectiveness of the training provided;
- ✓ Increasing the cooperation among DGs and with OLAF through regular meetings with counterparts from selection, policy and investigative units; Further improve practical work processes and organize meetings during the investigations and other meetings to clarify various aspects (e.g. electronic, paperless SECEM transmission of documents in an exchange on OLAF files);
- ✓ Keeping the list of DG EMPL's red flags<sup>19</sup> updated;

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<sup>19</sup> 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.

- ✓ Supporting Member States in further administrative capacity building in the field of fraud prevention and detection through the development of an e-learning module, a toolbox on how to prevent and detect fraud and corruption in funded projects, and by using template letters for the follow-up of OLAF reports that include a paragraph on the obligations of the Managing Authorities to systematically report fraud suspicions to the national criminal and judicial authorities (on top of IMS) and to assess wider implications of fraud cases uncovered in their programmes. DG EMPL and the other ESIF DGs will continue to produce or update guidance, best practices on relevant topics, offer training and encourage sharing of good practices, and systematically invite in particular OLAF to meetings, including Annual Control Meetings and Technical Meetings with Audit Authorities.

DG EMPL's anti-fraud strategy for direct management includes an action plan for the period 2020-2023 and foresees a review in the course of 2022.

The *Joint Anti-Fraud Strategy for shared management* (JAFS) includes an action plan for the period 2020-2025 covering also the end of the current programming period (2014-2020) as the eligibility period for programmes ends on 31 December 2023 and closure is expected by 2025 (with the last annual accounts foreseen for February 2025). At the same time, this extended lifespan will also cover the start of the next programming period (2021-2027). A revision of the strategy will thus be possible, if judged necessary, when more experience will be obtained on the implementation of the 2021-2027 program.

## D. Digital transformation and information management

In the context of the EC digital strategy, the implementation plan presented in March 2019 to the Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board introduced the concept of a **corporate digital solutions modernisation plan**. From this perspective, DG EMPL will develop and review its modernisation plan in close coordination with the other DGs in the ESIF family<sup>20</sup>.

This IT modernisation plan exercise **focuses on new initiatives and needs based on business visions**. It does not include the ongoing and planned efforts related to modernisation of the existing IT portfolio or the business continuity. However, this remains critical for the core business of all five ESIF DGs and, therefore, will remain the main priority in terms of budgetary allocation. Although not strictly part of this modernisation plan, a considerable modernisation is already planned in these flagship projects in the areas of shared management, direct management, skills/jobs and social security.

DG EMPL's modernisation plan will be formulated under a business vision of a modernised way of policymaking, implementation of policies, communicating and providing services to stakeholders or citizens.

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<sup>20</sup> European Structural and Investment Funds family include the following DGs: AGRI, EMPL, HOME, MARE and REGIO.

Proper **collaboration tools** will continue to be implemented for interaction with external entities (Member States' authorities, working groups, agencies, etc.) regarding exchange and sharing of documents and files, messaging or video conferences.

A **multi-domain exchange network** should be provided as an evolution of TESTA giving much higher added value by acting as a service broker, where basic services such as authentication of the parties, encryption, directory of services, etc., are provided centrally. Rules should be developed to determine which data can be transmitted via internet (using EU Send and EU Box) and via TESTA. This would be of particular interest in the area of Social Security.

**Design and implementation using new technologies based on 'software as a service'** (SAAS) for EU wide information systems will provide interaction with third parties and require immutability. The use of modern technologies for these 'multinational systems' becomes more apparent due to complex requirements such as storing digitally signed certificates (diplomas) which in turn require technologies such as 'block chain' for ease of use and to avoid fraudulent activities.

Overall, DG EMPL will consider the principles defined in the Commission data governance and data policies in relation to the development of its IT systems for proper data management and data quality.

In terms of **information management**, DG EMPL uses and produces considerable information and knowledge to support its activities. It exploits notably data from Eurostat, international organisations, expert networks or external contractors to develop evidence base for its policy and legislative initiatives. It also produces detailed analytical reports and country analysis to support the EU Semester. In addition, it regularly receives implementation data from all the operational programmes it finances, it monitors the implementation of legislation or policy reforms in all Member States as well as some third countries.

In a context of scarce resources and aiming for efficiency, it is especially important that such information and knowledge is widely shared within the DG as well as with other DGs.

DG EMPL will pursue this objective over the current Commission mandate with two **priority areas** in mind:

- ✓ the European Semester, where it is essential that different parts of the DG (thematic, analytical and geographical units) pool their respective knowledge to build an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses in Member States to form a solid base for decision making;
- ✓ the ESI funds, where it will be essential to ensure a good flow of information throughout the DG and sharing information with other ESIF DGs both on programme management and on the performance monitoring.

As regards **document management**, DG EMPL has identified the following priorities in line with the Commission Strategy on data, information and knowledge management<sup>21</sup>:

- ✓ Continue promoting electronic archiving and the use of electronic workflows and systems in the DG, including in relation to financial management;
- ✓ Treat the pre-edomec paper archives of the DG according to the Commission Common Retention List of files, make inventories and apply actions of digitalisation, elimination or transfer to the Commission Historical Archives.

The **protection of personal data** has always been a high priority for the European Commission and, implicitly, for DG EMPL. The entry into application of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 constituted a crucial milestone for implementing ambitious standards on data protection across the EU and was complemented by the entry into force of the equivalent data protection rules for the European institutions and bodies as Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

The Commission adopted an **Action Plan** C(2018)7432 to support and structure the implementation process, with particular emphasis **on enhancing the Commission's administrative capacity for data protection**. The objectives set out in this Action Plan are still relevant and will be pursued by DG EMPL in the period 2020-2024:

- ✓ Strengthening accountability and ownership;
- ✓ Empowering of and awareness-raising among Commission staff;
- ✓ Ensuring a proper record keeping and a risk-based approach;
- ✓ Improving the relationships with the citizens;
- ✓ Monitoring compliance and ensuring follow-up.

## E. Sound environmental management

DG EMPL takes ownership of the Commission sound environmental proposals and is committed to address it locally, taking also due account of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Commission's working methods. To this end, DG EMPL will focus on the following priorities in the period 2020-2024:

### 1. **More efficient use of resources**<sup>22</sup>

#### ✓ Energy:

- Promote staff awareness about optimal energy use and 'switching off, when not in use' with environment friendly stickers to remind staff to switch off the light when they leave their office for more than a few minutes;
- Participate in the end of the year energy saving action as every year but with better information and awareness raising.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://europa.eu/!Bn69xQ>, <https://europa.eu/!gK86mG>

<sup>22</sup> Corporate EMAS indicators, validated by other services such as OIB, OIL, DIGIT, SCIC and SG.



- ✓ Paper: Promote staff awareness about optimal paper use and encourage the adoption of existing digital tools for sharing information such as sharepoint, collaborative sites, public folders, as well as equipping the staff with laptops.
- ✓ Reducing emissions:
  - Building on the positive experience with the online working methods during the COVID-19 crisis, encourage the management to assess the relevance of each mission and replace them where possible with videoconferences; if the mission nevertheless proves to be the most efficient way to meet the goals of the DG, the mission guide provides advice on best practices (e.g. use of public transportation, use of train if the mission location is less than 400 km from the place of work, combining several meetings and events in one mission);
  - Modify the validation chain for missions to ensure that these are as green as possible; as a result, the missions within EU borders will be validated by directors while those outside EU will need the approval of the Director-General;
  - Promote staff awareness actions about sustainable commuting during EU Mobility week (September) and VeloMai events (May) through 30 seconds movies promoting our colleagues who abandoned their cars.

## **2. Reducing and managing waste**

- ✓ Promote staff awareness about waste reduction and sorting in line with the corporate EMAS waste recommendations:
  - Sorting stations in all DG EMPL;
  - Glass container;
  - Awareness raising campaign to promote the Commission guidelines for sustainable meetings and events (lunch time sessions);
  - EMPL Zero Waste Challenge (in cooperation with the association *Zero Waste Belgium*), a game for teams in DG EMPL with a prize at the end.

## **3. Promoting green public procurement**

- ✓ Introducing a DG specific office supplies' catalogue, including only 100% green items.

A dedicated intranet page was made available to DG EMPL staff by its EMAS team with additional information to enhance the visibility and importance of applying a sound environmental management at all levels.

## ANNEX: Performance tables<sup>23</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have lasting consequences for European societies as well as for the Commission's own working methods. Since the true impact is yet unclear, the indicators of the present Strategic Plan may have to be adapted in the course of the period 2020-2024.

### Indicators supporting part 1 of the strategic plan<sup>24</sup>

General objective 2: A Europe fit for the digital age		
<b>Impact indicator: Digital skills<sup>25 26</sup></b>		
<p><b>Explanation:</b> : The basic digital skills indicator looks at selected activities performed by individuals aged 16 to 74 on the internet in the four specific areas (information, communication, problem solving, content creation). It is assumed that individuals having performed certain activities have the corresponding skills; therefore, the indicator can be considered as a proxy of the digital competences and skills of individuals. Finally, based on the performance in the four specific areas, an overall digital skills indicator is calculated as a proxy of the digital competences and skills of individuals ('no skills', 'low', 'basic' or 'above basic'). The basic digital skills indicator shows the share of individuals with 'basic' and 'above basic' skills.</p> <p><b>Source of the data:</b> Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: <a href="#">isoc_sk_dskl_i</a> and <a href="#">isoc_sk_cskl_i</a>)</p>		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
Basic digital skills: 56%	63%	67%

<b>Specific objective 2.1: A digitally skilled workforce</b>	Related to spending programmes: ESF+, Next Generation EU (RRF, JTF and REACT-EU), Erasmus+ and InvestEU
<b>Result indicator 1: Use of European Digital Competence Framework</b>	
<p><b>Explanation:</b> The indicator shows the number of Member States using the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp).</p> <p><b>Source of data:</b> DigComp Into Action <a href="https://europa.eu/!Gv98Vy">https://europa.eu/!Gv98Vy</a></p>	

<sup>23</sup> The milestones and targets are set based on the pre-COVID-19 crisis and their achievement depends to a large extent on the evolution of the crisis which is unknown at the time this document is published.

<sup>24</sup> The missing baseline, interim milestone and target for ESF+ related indicators will be set in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2021 based on historical costs and adjusted in 2022 upon adoption of all the 2021-2027 operational programmes.

<sup>25</sup> New methodology for the calculation of this indicator is currently under development. This indicator might be revised.

<sup>26</sup> The 2022 interim milestone and the 2024 target from this Strategic Plan were set based on the 2025 target from the Skills Agenda (70%): <https://europa.eu/!up49hm>.

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Collection of evidence through stakeholders/projects followed by calculation of the number of initiatives using the framework and, based on it, the country coverage where framework is used.

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
13	20	27

**Result indicator 2: Users of the new Europass platform for learning and career management**

**Explanation:** Europass is one of the most visited Europa websites and one of the few tools that the EU provides directly to the public to support careers and employability. Visitor numbers to the platform and numbers of registered users will be key indicators of the popularity and impact of Europass.

**Source of data:** Visitor numbers and other data on the use of the Europass platform will be published on <https://europa.eu/!bR36rM> (live from July 2020)

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Visitor numbers and other statistics will be calculated using Europa Analytics, the corporate service for monitoring Commission websites.

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
72 000 visits per day - registered users	80 000 visits per day 1 000 000 registered users	95 000 visits per day 2 500 000 registered users

**General objective 3: An economy that works for people**

**Impact indicator 1: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion<sup>27</sup>**

**Explanation:** The indicator shows the percentage of people affected by at least one of the following three forms of poverty: income poverty, severe material deprivation and very low work intensity. Children are those under the age of 18.

**Source of the data:** Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [sdg\\_01\\_10](#) and [dataset.ilc.peps01](#)).

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2020)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
Total population: 21.8% <sup>28</sup>	Decrease	Decrease
Children: 24.2% <sup>29</sup>	Decrease	Decrease

**Impact indicator 2: In work at-risk-of-poverty rate**

**Explanation:** This indicator refers to the share of employed people aged 18 years or over at risk of income poverty. People are considered employed if they held a job for more than half of the reference year.

**Source of the data:** Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [SDG\\_01\\_41](#) and [tesov110](#)), based on the EU

<sup>27</sup> New methodology for the calculation of this indicator is currently under development. This indicator might be revised.

<sup>28</sup> Estimate

<sup>29</sup> Estimate

Statistics on Income and Living Conditions.		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
9.3%	Decrease	Decrease
<b>Impact indicator 3: Employment rate of persons aged 20 to 64</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 20 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group.		
<b>Source of the data:</b> Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: <a href="#">sdg_08_30</a> ), based on the EU Labour Force Survey.		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2020)	Target (2024)
72.4%	75%	Increase
<b>Impact indicator 4: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> A considerable proportion of young people aged 15 to 29 in the EU are economically inactive. For some this is due to the pursuit of education and training. Others, however, have withdrawn from the labour market or are not entering it after leaving the education system. This indicator captures those who struggle with the transition from education to work and measures the share of the population aged 15 to 29 who is not employed and not involved in education or training.		
<b>Source of the data:</b> Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: <a href="#">sdg_08_20</a> ), based on the EU Labour Force Survey.		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
12.6%	Decrease	Decrease

<b>Specific objective 3.1: Effective support to Member States in their structural reforms and investments in the context of the European Semester</b>	Related to spending programmes: ESF+, Erasmus+, InvestEU and Next Generation EU (RRF, JTF and REACT-EU)
<b>Result indicator: Level of implementation of the employment and social policy components of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), based on a disaggregation by priorities of each CSR and with more emphasis on the multiannual dimension</b>	
<p><b>Explanation:</b> The European Semester represents a yearly cycle of economic governance and country specific surveillance. In respect of Treaty obligations, DG EMPL fosters coordination and governance of employment and social policies within the European Semester, issuing to that end Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) and Staff Working Documents (SWDs) that monitor progress in the implementation of CSRs from previous years.</p> <p>The implementation of the employment and social policy reforms as provided for in the CSRs is instrumental in ensuring the implementation of EU priorities. The percentage of CSRs from the previous year in the field of employment and social policies which have been partially or completely complied with indicates the effectiveness of the policy guidance, coordination and governance by the Commission.</p> <p>However Member States are ultimately responsible for the implementation of CSRs. In 2019, the European Semester was better linked to EU funding with a stronger focus on investment needs in the 2019 Country Reports and a new annex D on Cohesion policy investment priorities. In 2020, DG EMPL also contributed to the incorporation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the 2020 draft Country Reports and to a strong social fairness dimension in the reports (one of the key priorities in the new Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy). This included drafting input to the new Annex D on investment priorities for the Just Transition Fund.</p> <p>In this context, the Commission's proposal for a Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the Recovery</p>	

Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) aim at helping Member States to address the challenges identified in the European Semester through large-scale financial support to reforms and investments, in areas such as competitiveness, productivity, environmental sustainability, education and skills, health, employment, and economic, social and territorial cohesion. To access the facility, Member States should prepare 'recovery and resilience plans' setting out their reform and investment agendas for the subsequent four years, until 2024 to address the challenges identified in the context of the European Semester. The Commission will assess the plans on the basis of transparent criteria and adopt a decision setting out the financial contribution (grant and, if requested, loans). The Commission has already identified some performance indicators (e.g. number of recovery and resilience plans agreed and implemented; overall financial contribution allocated). A set of indicators be further defined, in agreement with the Member State concerned, at the level of individual recovery and resilience plans. The disbursement of the financial contribution will follow the completion of the milestones and targets.

**Source of data:** Staff Working Documents

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** The indicator measures the level of multiannual implementation of CSRs from 2018 to the latest available year as assessed in the CeSaR database. Progress is considered when 'some', 'substantial' or 'full' progress has been achieved according to the CeSaR multiannual assessment. CSRs with 'limited' progress or 'no progress' are excluded. DG EMPL related CSRs are all those that DG EMPL and sister DGs (in particular EAC) have been associated to in the CeSaR database.

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
Number of DG EMPL related CSR subparts: 113 Number of DG EMPL related CSR subparts with at least some progress: 49 % with at least some progress: 43%	50% of DG EMPL CSR subparts with at least some progress	75% of DG EMPL CSR subparts with at least some progress

### Specific objective 3.2: Stronger social dialogue

Related to spending programmes:  
Prerogatives and ESF+

#### Result indicator 1: Share of the EU workforce covered by sectoral social dialogue committees

**Explanation:** The indicator measures the relevance of sectoral social dialogue committees for the EU labour market and economy.

**Source of data:** European Commission\_EMPL-A2

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Calculations based on representativeness studies.

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
75%	75%	75%

#### Result indicator 2: Social dialogue outcomes

**Explanation:** The indicator looks at the outputs of social dialogue. It measures the level of activity of EU social dialogue which depends on the activities of the social partners and on the Commission support.

**Source of data:** European Commission\_EMPL-A2 database

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Measurement on the basis of the number of joint texts (this

includes procedural texts, follow-up reports, tools, declarations, joint opinions, policy orientations, codes of conduct, guidelines, frameworks of actions, autonomous agreements and agreements Council Decisions) agreed between social partners in a given year at either sectoral or cross-industry level.

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
33	35	37

**Specific objective 3.3: Decent and safe working conditions for all**

Related to spending programme:  
ESF+

**Result indicator: Percentage of complaints, EU pilot and infringement procedures handled within Commission benchmarks**

**Explanation:** The indicator consists of three sub-indicators which reflect the effectiveness of the Commission's services in relation to both monitoring of the transposition and application of the EU law.

**Source of data:** European Commission\_Semestrial coherence exercise\_EMPL-B2/B3

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:**

Complaints: Percentage of complaints registered in CHAP system successfully handled by the Commission within the benchmark set by the Secretariat-General (1 year). Any person or organisation may submit a complaint about any measure (law, regulation or administrative action), absence of measure or practice by a Member State which they consider incompatible with respective Union law. As a general rule, the Commission will investigate complaints with a view to arriving at a decision to issue a formal notice or to close the case within not more than 1 year from the date of registration of the complaint. After investigating the complaint, which may include a consultation of the national authorities in the EU Pilot system, the Commission may either issue a formal notice opening proceedings against the Member State in question, or close the case definitively.

EU Pilot: Percentage of complaints registered in EU Pilot successfully handled within the benchmark set by the Secretariat-General (70 days). EU Pilot is the main tool for the Commission to communicate with the participating Member States on issues raising a question concerning the correct application of EU law or the conformity of the law in a Member State with EU law at an early stage, i.e. before an infringement procedure is launched under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), but after the preliminary analysis of the complaint in CHAP. If no solution compatible with EU law is found in a communication with the Member State, an infringement proceeding under Article 258 of the TFEU may be launched. The objective of EU Pilot is to achieve faster results and to find solutions compatible with EU law for citizens and business through better cooperation between the Member States and the Commission without the need to launch infringement procedures under Article 258 of the TFEU.

Infringements: Percentage of non-compliance procedures registered in NIF system successfully handled within the benchmark set by the Secretariat-General (3 years). The NIF system is the IT tool for the Commission's infringements (letters of formal notice, reasoned opinions, referrals and closures).

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
Complaints:		
85% Labour law	90%	95%
61% Health and Safety	92%	92%
EU Pilot:		
0% Labour law	80%	80%

0% Health and Safety	80%	90%
Infringements:		
48.8% Labour law	65%	75%
100% Health and Safety	100%	100%

<b>Specific objective 3.4: Better functioning labour markets</b>	Related to spending programmes: ESF+ and EGF.
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**Result indicator 1: Participants (unemployed and inactive) in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention**

**Explanation:** Total number of participants supported by ESF+ shared management who are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving the intervention - Annex I of the ESF+ regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Unemployed or inactive persons who have received ESF+ shared management support and who are in employment, including self-employment, immediately upon leaving the ESF operation, whereby 'unemployed' includes long-term unemployed.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
25%	-	-

**Result indicator 2: Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention**

**Explanation:** Inactive persons who have received ESF+ shared management support and who are newly engaged in job searching activities upon leaving the ESF+ operation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** 'Engaged in job searching' looks at persons that are usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons who have newly registered with the public employment services as jobseekers should always be counted even if they are not immediately available for work.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
16%	-	-

**Result indicator 3: Unemployed, including long-term unemployed, participants supported by the ESF+ shared management**

**Explanation:** Total number of unemployed participants supported by ESF+ shared management - Annex I of the ESF+ regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Unemployed are persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered as registered unemployed according to national definitions are always included here even if they do not fulfil all three of these criteria.

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
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(2018)	(2022)	(2024)
67%	N/A	> 50%
<b>Result indicator 4: Young people below 30 years of age supported by the ESF+ shared management</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> Total number of participants below 30 years of age supported by ESF+ (shared management) - Annex I of the ESF+ regulation.		
<b>Source of data:</b> Transmission of data from Managing Authorities		
<b>Methodology for calculating the indicator:</b> The age of the participants is calculated based on the date of birth.		
<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
-	-	-
<b>Result indicator 5: Percentage of EGF beneficiaries in employment and self-employment 6 months after the end of the implementing period</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> The number of workers supported by the EGF that are back into employment 6 months after the implementation period as part of the number of workers to whom EGF co-financed services were offered (shared management).		
<b>Source of data:</b> Transmission of data from Managing Authorities		
<b>Methodology for calculating the indicator:</b> Percentage of EGF beneficiaries in employment (broken down by type of employment contract: full time/part time, fixed term/open ended) and self-employed, 6 months after the end of the implementation period.		
<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
67%	N/A	>50%

<b>Specific objective 3.5: Greater social fairness and more effective social protection</b>	Related to spending programme: ESF+.
<b>Result indicator 1: Number of persons with a foreign background and minorities (including marginalised communities such as Roma) reached by the ESF+ shared management</b>	
<b>Explanation:</b> The indicator shows the number of participants in ESF+ shared management operations, which were persons with a foreign background and minorities, including marginalised communities such as Roma (ESF+ general support) - Annex I of the ESF+ Regulation.	
<b>Source of data:</b> Transmission of data from Managing Authorities	
<b>Methodology for calculating the indicator:</b> Total number of participants with a foreign background and minorities, including marginalised communities such as Roma, supported by ESF+ shared management.	
<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)
-	-
<b>Result indicator 2: Participants above 54 years old reached by ESF+ (shared management)</b>	



**Explanation:** The indicator shows the number of participants in ESF+ shared management operations, above 54 years of age (ESF+ general support) - Annex I of the ESF+ regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Total number of participants above 54 years of age supported by ESF+ shared management.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
-	-	-

**Result indicator 3: Number of persons receiving food and material support from the fund**

**Explanation:** The indicator shows the estimated number of the end recipients, receiving food and material support under ESF+ shared management for addressing material deprivation - Annex II of the ESF+ regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Total number of persons receiving food and material support from ESF+ shared management (composite indicator). Each person is counted or estimated only once per year (the number of persons receiving food support and the number of persons receiving material assistance as there can be overlaps since some people might receive both types of assistance; moreover, same person may receive support each year, therefore cumulative values are not relevant).

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
-	-	-

**Result indicator 4: Number of children under 18 receiving food and material support from the fund**

**Explanation:** The indicator shows the estimated number of children under 18 receiving food and material support under ESF+ support for addressing material deprivation - Annex II of the ESF+ regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Total number of children under 18 receiving food and material support from ESF+ shared management (subset of the indicator number 4 above). Each child is counted or estimated only once per year (the number of children receiving food support and the number of children receiving material assistance as there can be overlaps since some children might receive both types of assistance; moreover, same child may receive support each year, therefore cumulative values are not relevant).

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
-	-	-

**Specific objective 3.6: Enhanced labour mobility**

Related to spending programme:  
ESF+

**Result indicator: Facilitate labour mobility**

**Explanation:** The EURES Regulation provides for better transparency on EU labour markets, enables workers to take informed decisions on intra-EU mobility and delivers support services that can facilitate fair mobility throughout the Union. In this context, a specific result of the process is reflected through the number of

placements that are ensured by the EURES network, both at national level, through the EURES National Coordination Offices and at EU level, directly through the EURES portal

**Source of data:** European Commission\_EMPL-D1 based on EURES performance measurement system and the EURES portal satisfaction survey

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Number of placements ensured at national level by the EURES National Coordination Offices and the estimate of number of placements facilitated through the EURES portal.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022) <sup>30</sup>	Target (2024)
84 500	95 000	100 000

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

Related to spending programmes: ESF+ (EaSI 3<sup>rd</sup> axis) and InvestEU Social Window

#### Result indicator: **Jobs created**

**Explanation:** Lack of finance is often a difficult obstacle for both micro- and social enterprises to face when being created or consolidated. The Commission considers the provision of micro-finance and social enterprise finance an important factor in achieving the specific objective of creation and expansion of micro- and social enterprises.

**Source of data:** European Commission\_EMPL-E1 based on EaSI Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship annual implementation reports, InvestEU reporting

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Cumulative end-period number of jobs in micro- and social enterprises that have received EU financing by that date.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
94 155	256 000	320 000

### General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life

#### Impact indicator: **Adult participation in learning**<sup>31 32</sup>

**Explanation:** The indicator measures the share of people aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received formal or non-formal education and training in the 12 months preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not respond to the question 'participation in education and training'. Adult learning covers formal and non-formal learning activities — both general and vocational — undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training.

<sup>30</sup> The milestones are set taking into account the current trends of intra-EU labour mobility.

<sup>31</sup> New methodology for the calculation of this indicator is currently under development. This indicator might be revised and the new methodology be rolled out as of 2022.

<sup>32</sup> The 2022 interim milestone and the 2024 target from this Strategic Plan were set based on the 2025 target from the Skills Agenda (50%): <https://europa.eu/lup49hm>.

**Source of the data:** DG EMPL calculation based on Eurostat data (Adult Education Survey)

Baseline (2016)	Interim milestone (2020)	Target (2024)
37.9%	44%	48%

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

Related to spending programmes: ESF+, Next Generation EU (RFF, JTF and REACT-EU), Erasmus+, InvestEU

**Result indicator 1: Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving the ESF+ shared management intervention**

**Explanation:** Persons who have received ESF+ support and who gained a qualification upon leaving the ESF+ operation.

**Source of data:** European Commission, European Qualifications Framework <https://europa.eu/!rf78xN>

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Qualification means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
0% (new programme)	Increase	Increase

**Result indicator 2: Individuals benefiting from investment in skills, mobilised by the InvestEU**

**Explanation:** This is a core indicators set-out in the InvestEU regulation, to be included in the annual report by the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on the progress of InvestEU.

**Source of data:** European Commission\_EMPL-E3 based on data from ECFIN (InvestEU monitoring)

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** The indicator is calculated as the number of individuals benefiting from up-skilling actions through financing mobilised by InvestEU skills instruments under the Social and Skills Window. These are reported by the Implementing Partners to the Commission on the basis of guarantee agreements signed with each of them.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
0% (new programme)	Increase	Increase

**Result indicator 3: Share of low qualified adults (25-64) participating in learning<sup>33</sup>**

**Explanation:** This is an indicator already used in the European Semester benchmarking framework on adult skills in learning and included within the Skills Dashboard as part of the renewed Skills Agenda. It supports the implementation of Upskilling Pathways Recommendation, providing guidance to the Member States with regard to ensuring access of low-qualified or low-skilled adults to learning opportunities. Furthermore, this indicator has already been included as a sub-indicator of the broader adult participation in learning objectives adopted by the Council in 2003 and 2010.

<sup>33</sup> The 2022 interim milestone and the 2024 target from this Strategic Plan were set based on the 2025 target from the Skills Agenda (30%): <https://europa.eu/!up49hm>.

**Source of data:** Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [edat\\_lfse\\_03](#), based on the EU Labour Force Survey on the basis of the new methodology to be rolled out as of 2022). The reference value for 2016 is sourced from Adult Education Survey

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Calculated as % of adults aged 25-64 who report to have at most a lower-secondary educational attainment (ISCED 0-2) and who stated that they received formal or non-formal education and training in the twelve months preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group and educational attainment, excluding those who did not respond to the question 'participation in education and training'. This indicator is included in the Skills Dashboard with the renewed Skills Agenda.

Baseline (2016)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
18.4%	24.0%	28.0%

**Result indicator 4: Skills (mis)match - overqualification**

**Explanation:** The indicator measures overqualification in the adult working population, namely to what degree they work under capacity or where do they need additional upskilling to succeed in their job / increase their job security.

**Source of data:** Eurostat <https://europa.eu/!PT83Bg>

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Employed persons (20-64) with tertiary education who work in occupations for which a tertiary education level is not required using ISCED 5-8/EQF 6-8 level of education and ISCO2008 4-9 occupations.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
22.1%	21.0%	20.0%

**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: ESF+, Next Generation EU (RRF, JTF and REACT-EU), Erasmus+ and InvestEU

**Result indicator 1: Vocational education and training graduate employability<sup>34</sup>**

**Explanation:** Based on an existing indicator in the ET2020 framework, it measures the share of recent graduates from vocational education and training, having left education and training no more than three years before the reference year and who are not enrolled in any further education or training, who are in employment. This indicator is regularly used in the European Semester as well as reported in the Joint Employment Report and the Education and Training Monitor.

**Source of data:** Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [edat\\_lfse\\_24](#))

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Percentage of recent graduates employed, aged 20-34, who's highest educational attainment is ISCED-3, ISCED-4 or ISCED-5 and who are not participating in further formal or non-formal education or training.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)

<sup>34</sup> The 2022 interim milestone and the 2024 target from this Strategic Plan were set based on the 2025 target from the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training (82%): <https://europa.eu/!md84Dt>.

79%	Increase	81%
<b>Result indicator 2: Vocational education and training learning mobility<sup>35</sup></b>		
<p><b>Explanation:</b> The indicator measures the share of mobile vocational education and training (VET) learners supported by Erasmus+ for learning mobility, as part of a cohort of VET learners. The indicator is a new proposal modifying the IVET Learning Mobility benchmark set by the Council under ET2020 framework, but which needed re-development given the inadequacy of the data source for the monitoring as concluded in Commission Progress Report to the Council on Learning Mobility.</p> <p><b>Source of data:</b> European Commission_EMPL-E3 based on data from EAC (Erasmus+ operational reporting) and Eurostat (UOE data)</p> <p><b>Methodology for calculating the indicator:</b> The number of learners in VET benefiting from a learning mobility in a reference year, measured as the share of mobile learners in a calendar year as a proportion of a cohort of VET graduates in the same reference year.</p>		
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
5%	Increase	7%
<b>Result indicator 3: Share of recent graduates from vocational education and training who have benefited from exposure to work-based learning<sup>36</sup></b>		
<p><b>Explanation:</b> New indicator measuring the share of recent vocational education and training (VET) graduates who were exposed to work-based learning. Promoting work-based learning, given its benefits for improving labour market relevance, attractiveness and quality of VET, is a long-standing Commission policy priority. It is testified by recent policy initiatives such as Council Recommendation on a Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships as well as the Skills Agenda. This indicator is regularly used in the European Semester as well as reported in the Joint Employment Report and the Education and Training Monitor. The indicator could allow also distinguishing the share of learners in apprenticeships.</p> <p><b>Source of data:</b> Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: <a href="#">lfso_16feduc</a>)</p> <p><b>Methodology for calculating the indicator:</b> Calculated as a % of recent graduates aged 20-34, who acquired a VET qualification at ISCED 3 or ISCED 4 level and who report during their studies to have undertaken curriculum-related work-based learning (EU-LFS HATVOC variable - data collection starts in 2021 so first reporting in 2022).</p>		
<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
59.6%	Increase	59.9%

<sup>35</sup> The 2022 interim milestone and the 2024 target from this Strategic Plan were set based on the 2025 target from the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training (8%): <https://europa.eu/!md84Dt>.

<sup>36</sup> The 2022 interim milestone and the 2024 target from this Strategic Plan were set based on the 2025 target from the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training (60%): <https://europa.eu/!md84Dt>.

## General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

### Impact indicator: Gender employment gap

**Explanation:** The indicator measures the difference between men and women's employment rate (aged 20 to 64 years) in percentage points.

**Source of the data:** Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [sdg\\_05\\_30](#)), based on the EU Labour Force Survey.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2020)	Target (2024)
11.8%	Decrease	Decrease

### Specific objective 6.1: Equality

Related to spending programmes: ESF+, CERV and Next Generation EU (REACT-EU and RRF)

#### Result indicator 1: Number of women reached by the ESF+ (shared management)

**Explanation:** The indicator shows the number of participants in ESF+ shared management operations, which were women (ESF+ general support) - Annex I of the ESF+ Regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Total number of women supported by ESF+ (shared management).

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
-	-	-

#### Result indicator 2: Formal enrolment rates of child care for the population under 3 years old

**Explanation:** Percentage of children under 3 years old cared for by formal arrangements other than by the family.

**Source of data:** Eurostat (Eurostat online data code [tepsr\\_sp210](#) - EU Survey on income and living conditions)

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
35.2%	Increase	Increasing and converging towards best performers.

#### Result indicator 3: Number of persons with disabilities reached by the ESF+ shared management

**Explanation:** The indicator shows the number of participants in ESF+ shared management operations which were persons with disabilities (ESF+ general support) - Annex I of the ESF+ Regulation.

**Source of data:** Transmission of data from Managing Authorities

**Methodology for calculating the indicator:** Total number of persons with disabilities supported by ESF+ shared management.

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
-	-	-

**Indicators supporting part 2 of the strategic 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

**Indicator 1: Number and percentage of first female appointments to middle management positions**

**Source of data:** DG HR

<b>Baseline (female representation in management)</b> (2019)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
57%	First female appointment targets: 2 out of 3 new appointments (67%)

**Indicator 2: DG EMPL staff engagement index**

**Source of data:** Commission staff survey (data to be provided by DG HR)

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
72%	At least 72%

**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

**Indicator: Estimated risk at closure**

**Source of data:** Annual Control Reports

<b>Baseline</b> (2018)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
< 2% of relevant expenditure	< 2% of relevant expenditure

**Objective:** The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy<sup>37</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction<sup>38</sup> of fraud

**Indicator: Implementation of the actions included in DG EMPL’s anti-fraud strategies over the whole strategic plan lifecycle (2020-2024)**

<sup>37</sup> 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'.

<sup>38</sup> Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

**Source of data:** DG EMPL's annual activity report, DG EMPL's anti-fraud strategies (DG EMPL has 2 anti-fraud strategies in place, one for direct management and one for shared management, which is shared with DGs REGIO and MARE), OLAF reporting

<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>
(2019)	(2024)
0% (new strategy)	100% of action points implemented in time

**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

**Indicator 1: Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions**

**Source of data:** Internal calculation based on guidance from DIGIT

<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>
(2020)	(2022)	(2024)
65%	80%	88%

**Indicator 2: Percentage of DG EMPL key data assets for which corporate principles for data governance have been implemented**

**Source of data:** Internal calculation based on guidance from the Secretariat General

<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>
(2020)	(2022)	(2024)
25%	50%	80%

**Indicator 3: Percentage of staff attending awareness raising activities on data protection compliance**

**Source of data:** HR and the data protection coordinator

<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>
(2018)	(2022)	(2024)
20% of DG EMPL staff had attended data protection trainings at SG and inhouse	<p><b>2020:</b> 100% of senior management;</p> <p><b>2021:</b> 50% of staff; 100% of senior and middle management; 100% of newcomers;</p> <p><b>2022:</b> 70% of staff, 100% of senior and middle management; 100% of newcomers;</p> <p><b>2023:</b> 90% of staff, 100% of senior and middle management; 100% of newcomers.</p>	100%