



Decision No 82 of the Management Board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) on the adoption of minutes of the meeting of the Management Board of 17 November 2023

THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS (hereinafter referred to as 'Eurofound'),

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/127 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing Eurofound, and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1365/751¹

Whereas article 22 of the Rules of Procedure of the Management Board states that minutes shall be taken at each meeting; shall include: the list of attendees; a summary of the discussions; the conclusions reached or decisions adopted by the Management Board; and shall be adopted by the Management Board,

Whereas the draft minutes were circulated to the members on 22 December 2023 with the possibility to comment until 31 January 2024 and no comments were received,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The minutes of the 7th meeting of the Management Board held on Friday, 17 November 2023 are adopted as annexed to this decision.

Done by written procedure on 14 June 2024

For the Management Board

The Chairperson

Annex:

Draft minutes of 7th meeting of the Management Board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 17 November 2023

¹ OJ L 30, 31.1.2019, p. 74–89.

**Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of Eurofound's Management Board,
Friday, 17 November 2023,**

09.00 – 13.00 Raymond-Pierre Bodin Conference Centre, Eurofound, Dublin
(and online via MS Teams)

1. Opening of meeting and adoption of draft Agenda (MB 7/1)

Ms Rossi (Employers) as Chair welcomed all participants - 44 participants in person and 33 online, with EU-OSHA, Cedefop, FRA and EIGE observers also joining online. Three proxy votes had also been received. She welcomed the new member appointed by the European Parliament (EP), Ms Caroline Reidy.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director, the Deputy Director and Eurofound staff for the very warm atmosphere in Eurofound and the excellent preparation of the meeting that allowed very fruitful exchanges and supported the running of an important agency.

Adoption of Eurofound's anti-fraud strategy (MB 7/13) was withdrawn from the agenda as new guidelines had been adopted by the European Commission. It would be adopted by written procedure later.

An additional administrative point was added to the agenda on the appointment of reporting officers for appraisal of the Executive Director.

The **Draft Agenda was adopted.**

2. Final minutes of 6th Meeting of the Management Board, 18 November 2022 (MB 7/2)

The minutes were provided for information only and had been approved on 26 June 2023 by a written procedure (see Decision 69 of the Management Board).

3. Progress Report of the Executive Director on the activities of Eurofound (MB 7/3)

- 3.1 The **Executive Director** outlined the general context in 2023 with the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine triggering migration flows and high inflation; and latterly with the escalation in the Middle east further raising geopolitical tensions. The economy had stabilised somewhat, but with slower growth than expected so that the European economy was not back on track. High employment rates were considered to be a macroeconomic stabiliser during the COVID crisis and the immediate period of recovery afterwards. However, the imbalance on the labour market which is related to shortages in many sectors needs to be addressed. Stabilisation of new forms of work was of immediate interest to Eurofound. Across Europe, experiences of new forms of work reflected good practice / bad practice relating to remote working, telework or hybrid forms of work. These new practices were appearing now at European level. Within this context, there were a number of priorities over the year. Firstly, the development of the multiannual programme to be adopted today. It had been a very comprehensive and useful process, not just the final result but the process,

led by the Deputy Director, Maria Jepsen. The exercise was based on a foresight exercise and on intensive consultations with stakeholders.

The second milestone to be mentioned for Eurofound for 2023 was finalising the preparation of the European Working Conditions Survey 2024 (EWCS 2024) to be launched in Spring 2024. This followed around two years of very intensive work.

The 2023 European year of skills was reflected in a number of Eurofound activities (including with sister agency Cedefop) on skills and vocational training.

He spoke of further good examples of expanding partnerships to find synergies and work better with external partners while retaining the focus and quality of Eurofound research. Many of the issues related to the green transition and the digital transformation.

Regarding the EU Institutions, Eurofound continued to work very closely with the European Commission, but also with the European Parliament and the European Council (mostly related to the work of the presidencies). Last year an agreement was signed with the European University Institute in Florence which is also the repository of the archives of the EU (including Eurofound).

Having signalled to the Management Board that the financial resources of Eurofound were under pressure, he thanked the European Commission and in particular DG Employment, Mr Korte and Ms Kauffmann for their assistance so that this year quite exceptionally, Eurofound had received a 7% budget increase for the first time in 20 years. While this relieved the strain on the budget somewhat, a number of internal efficiency measures were needed in order to preserve the capacity to work.

There was the continued and welcome possibility to contribute to pilot projects, e.g. the results of the pilot project on minimum wages were about to be published following three years work. The value of such projects was not to increase Eurofound's budget, but to work on a topic of expertise for Eurofound, collect valuable data, provide information and use it for further research.

There was no change regarding the staff establishment plan and the agency is managing to deliver with the current human resources.

Social dialogue was very good. A new Staff Committee has been elected and he hoped to have the same good level of cooperation as with the previous committee. An Internal working conditions survey was launched recently. In a break from tradition and in a spirit of mutual trust, the Staff Committee were asked to analyse data.

In his presentation, he shared some highlights of the research outputs 2023 so far: Under **Working conditions and sustainable work**, a joint event was held with ILO on essential workers. We continued working on job quality - a topic closely linked to the Working Conditions survey.

In terms of **Industrial Relations**, as well as the annual minimum wages review; publications related to: social partners and participation in the just transition, especially supporting the regions that are subject to this major transition; a focus on the involvement of the social partners in the recovery and resilience plans. There were very interesting trends with clear evidence across Europe generally that the more social partners are involved in the NRRPs adoption and implementation the better achieved results.

In terms of **Employment and labour markets**, there was a focus on the effects of the *Fit for 55* package on the labour market and employment. Additional jobs will be created with the green transition.

In terms of **living conditions and quality of life**: the publication of a report on the housing situation in Europe, reflecting collected information, statistics, feedback, good practices and bad practices was one which attracted very high interest and attention, as it is an issue across the European Union now.

Social services is another topic which is very important and attracting lots of interest with the potential for future development and deepening of research.

With regard to the research stream on **managing the impact of change**: work continues on telework and hybrid work not with analysing the testing but the establishment of practices. Regarding ethical digitalisation of work, a report was published on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the ethical side of implementation of the work – this is very much related also to the EU legislation on the topic.

The focus on green transition and its impact continues with a number of related projects over the last two years for which deliveries are already in place.

Promoting social cohesion and convergence: a publication on the economic and social inequalities in Europe after COVID which analyses how big the gaps are which affected convergence and what could be the eventual remedial measures.

Several papers addressing information requests were produced, for example, for the Swedish presidency and for the Spanish presidency of the Council, for the European Parliament and for the European Commission.

On the previously mentioned pilot projects assigned by the European Commission and approved by the Parliament, the 3 years' work on the minimum wages project is coming to an end. It links with the adopted minimum wage directive, especially in terms of collective bargaining.

The relatively small new pilot project is on working time reduction. The area of working time is one Eurofound is actively working on. The project will be based on mapping legislation and doing case studies and the data collected will be very useful for further work.

2023 has been and continues to be a very active year for Communication activities using some very different and innovative approaches, e.g the *Living and working in Europe* lecture. The event was very much directed to the Irish public, hosted by the Minister for Europe in the Government building and the proposal is to make it an annual event.

Eurofound's first Open Day in 20 years took place in June when the neighbours and local community were invited in. It was a big success.

An important *European Year of Skills* event involved five agencies partnered with DG Employment: Eurofound, Cedefop, EU-OSHA, European Training Foundation (ETF) and European Labour Authority (ELA). It was a demonstration of how five agencies can approach a topic from different but complementary points of view.

Thanks to the innovative spirit of colleagues, *virtual visits* at national level have taken place in Malta and Netherlands. They were 1-hour events with participation of stakeholders, national correspondents and Board Members and labour shortages was the selected by both hosts topic. Management Board members are asked - whenever there are events where Eurofound could contribute on a particular topic or general information – to request someone from Eurofound to participate.

Another new initiative, attracting a good level of interest are the *Eurofound Brussels briefings* – expert-oriented closed-door events for participants who want further, deeper details about an area of research.

Webinars, podcasts and other promotional activities under the Eurofound Live and Eurofound Talks series continue and can be found on the website.

The new website is launched following a revamp over two years, a lot of work and expense, but it is good to have a very functional, modern, visually pleasing and more user-friendly website.

Last year Eurofound achieved EMAS certification – the highest level of *environment management* – and is only one of few organisations in Ireland to have this certification. Over two years, energy consumption reduced by 24%, paper consumption reduced by 15%, waste by 19%, business travel by 70%.

Regarding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- KP1: 100% budget implementation is hoped for again this year.
- KP2: Staff capacity – working within establishment plan. It is not possible to have 100%, but at the end of the year there is 97% staff capacity with some selection procedures ongoing.
- KP3: Programme delivery is currently at 68%. 2 out of 38 reports will be delayed which are very large representativeness studies on the construction and the transport sectors. Otherwise, all reports will be published as planned at the beginning of 2023 and full delivery is expected.
- KP4: Recognition of scientific quality: the figures shown are until October, so faring well. Research of Eurofound is often referenced in scientific literature.
- KPI 5: Uptake in media was regularised last year following the increase during Covid. Last year's benchmark has already been met, so there are improvements.
- Uptake of knowledge through website: Top downloads are the *housing* report, the *living and working Europe* report and the *minimum wages* report, followed by *Working conditions in times of COVID*.
- KPI6: Engagement with stakeholders: Increased compared to last year reflecting very good participation in events.
- KPI7: Uptake of Eurofound's expertise in EU-level policy documents: – Final figures will be available at year end, but a number of very important publications of the European Commission, Council papers, European Parliament research and positions where Eurofound's research is referenced. This is a very good sign for the focus on policy issues for which Eurofound can provide information.

3.2 **The Chair** thanked the Executive Director for his excellent presentation giving an opportunity to have the full picture of what Eurofound is doing at both the European level but also getting in touch with national realities which is extremely important. She invited comments.

3.3 **Mr Kouwenberg (Workers)** thanked the Executive Director for his presentation and the good work over the very busy last year including the development of a new multiannual Programming Document. Many good things were done, e.g. the efficient social dialogue, increasing mutual trust, the very important invitation to staff to discuss how to be efficient and the Workers' group appreciated these actions. Regarding the reports, the minimum wages report was very important, but also those on economic and social inequality after the COVID-19 period and the Housing Costs report were all very important for social partners at national and international level and thus very appreciated.

Mr Kouwenberg had represented the Netherlands trade unions at the Netherlands *virtual visit* and found it an interesting event with good discussion with scientists and national bureaus on the work of Eurofound.

- 3.4 **Mr Kanjou Augé** (European Commission) thanked the Executive Director for his presentation and conveyed the apologies of the Deputy Chair, Ms Kauffmann who was speaking at the European Employment and Social Rights Forum in Brussels. He had noted publication of twenty-two research reports, meaning almost one every two or two and a half weeks. In addition to all the events, podcasts and webinars and the new website this was impressive, and he thanked the Executive Director and all the Eurofound staff for all this work.

The work on essential workers was welcomed by the Commission, as well as the cooperation with the ILO on this subject. The pilot project on minimum wages (presented on the previous day to the Groups) was important work and special congratulations were due for developing the EU wide database on collective agreements and their associated pay rates related to low-paid workers.

The work on the topic of labour shortages was now very high on the policy agenda. Also welcome was the report on the important topic of affordable and adequate housing. This was an area where sometimes there was not a lot of research, but it was becoming more and more prominent at political level.

The Commission were happy to see the EWCS progressing, with the pilot completed and field work due to start next year. This is flagship output of Eurofound, it is important that it remains as such.

On the Representativeness studies, the Commission were happy to see that Eurofound was fully engaged, that two studies were published, with two more still to be published in 2023. It is regrettable that there are some delays, in two other studies, encouraging colleagues not only to deliver the results in a timely manner, but also to keep improving the quality.

All in all, Eurofound had delivered a lot in a challenging context. The Commission were glad to have been able to provide some breathing space to Eurofound even if the budget remained quite tight.

He then gave a quick update on developments at EU level.

- 3.5 **Mr Ciechański (Governments)** added his thanks to the Executive Director and the Governments' Group's appreciation for the quality of Eurofound's research, especially under the current circumstances when there was a focus on issues like Just Transition, distributive effects of twin transitions, upward social convergence and cohesion as well as ambitious policies on climate. It was very important that Eurofound was keeping track of and producing research on the social consequences, the quality of work and life consequences and the employment consequences of these changes. Eurofound's agility in trying to respond quickly and in a timely way to changing developments is appreciated.

The full budget execution was also appreciated, and it was very good that the European Commission appeared to have gone out of its way to relieve the budgetary stress of Eurofound, hopefully to continue into the future. Also appreciated was the fact that the Eurofound was proactively seeking access to new research funding like through the Horizon Europe Programme. Cooperation with other agencies is very welcome, too.

As usual the Government group supported a good relationship between the management and the staff of the agency. The Executive Director and Deputy Director were mindful of that and know the importance of keeping lines of communication open.

- 3.6 **Ms Kwiatkiewicz (Employers)** expressed appreciation for the efforts made to be closer to the national developments through the virtual visits. It took time to build the networks for such initiatives, so the Employers' group were glad to promote these events and share with their members. Similarly, the joint events were welcome showing an existing trust that was being built on, towards understanding how to smoothly and seamlessly cooperate. Regarding the Commission's request for a project on working time reduction, the Employers would have preferred the topic of working time flexibility in the context of very serious labour shortages and fighting for talent. A practical request is to have one person from Eurofound nominated as the 'owner' of the table with the timetable of the reports being sent for evaluation with the Advisory Committees and that regular updates be sent. This would facilitate updates in relation to knowing when drafts become available.
- 3.7 **Mr Marra (Workers)** expressed his appreciation and congratulations to the Executive Director and the whole staff on doing an excellent job. On the point of working time reduction, Eurofound was tasked with analysing and presenting results on different topics. Working time reduction was one of the items that has been selected as a priority, for instance from the European Trade Union Confederation Congress. Most of the unions represented on the Board were members and affiliates of the ETUC and would encourage continuation of this project in the belief that an authoritative institute can present results that are guided by scientific data. This was only one of the many items that can potentially be politically sensitive in different countries.
- 3.8 **The Executive Director** thanked the Chair and all contributors for the very positive words on Eurofound. He wished to clarify that the title of the pilot projects are not Eurofound's choice.
- 3.9 **The Chair** said that the lively exchange between the representatives of the employers and the trade unions showed how Eurofound really was at the centre of the debate. It was very positive that there was a balanced approach to the issues reflecting **social partners, governments and the Commission**. She appealed for some training for users on the new website. Some information which was available on the old one is not yet on the new website (e.g., country profiles).
- 4. Programming Document 2024 – final draft (MB7/4).**
- 4.1 **The Chair** explained that the Executive Board members had been sorry to miss the topical presentations on the previous day, in order to discuss the last draft of the Programming Document and agreed on a number of amendments. She invited the Deputy Director to present the amendments being discussed today for adoption of the final draft of the 2024 Programming Document (MB 7/4).
- 4.2 **The Deputy Director** explained that final changes and details of the budget structure would be sent separately to the Management Board for adoption by written procedure in December. The draft Programming Document was presented and discussed at the Group meetings and is for approval including the following amendments:
- On page 10 line 246, 247 the sentence will now read “the social partners are negotiating an autonomous agreement on telework and the right to disconnect, which if signed is to be implemented via a directive. The social

partners also propose a framework of actions (green transition) as well as three seminars leading to a signing of a joint statement (youth employment), joint guidelines, (work related privacy and surveillance) and joint research project (the skills priority.)”

- The second amendment is on page 15, line 384 - instead of reading “European working conditions survey” it should read “European working conditions telephone survey (EWCTS)”.
- On page 28, line 792, 793 and page 40, line 1228 the sentence will now read “the European quality of life survey (EQLS) will be fielded in 2026 using lessons learnt from the 2024 EWCS test survey.” (So that change will be introduced at two places in the PD.)
- Page 41, line 1260 will now read “preparations for the 2026 EQLS will continue in 2024.”
- On page 38, lines 1165-1172 where the project description will now read “building on the work done in 2019 and using data from 2021 household finance and consumption survey Eurofound will review how the levels of overall wealth distribution developed during the recent period. In recent years, some economic sectors declined and others grew, and consumption patterns change, reflecting decrease in incomes and reliance on financial support for some and increasing saving capacity for others. Building on the previously developed expertise Eurofound will seek to identify changes in overall wealth distribution and will produce a more detailed account of the size and composition of the population with no or negative wealth, and of the asset composition of the wealth quantiles.”
- In the table following line 1182 the third project will now read, “the dynamics of wealth distribution in Europe.”
- The next amendment is on page 41, line 1266, and here the sentence will now read “the western Balkan countries and Türkiye.”
- the footnote on page 58 will be replaced, firstly introducing the amount that will go for procurement, the global procurement envelope, after stipulating how this ensures compliance with the financial regulation by doing so.
- The last amendment to the Programming Document 2024 is the last annex, annex XIII on page 100, line 2099 - 2100 and the title of the annex 13 will now read “overview of projects in 2024 taking into consideration the rise of refugees and cost-of-living in the wake of the war in Ukraine.”

The Groups agreed to the changes and the Chair confirmed that Programming Document 2024 was adopted as amended.

5. Multiannual Research Programme 2025-2028 – final draft (MB 7/5)

5.1 The **Multiannual Research Programme** for the next programming cycle 2025-2028 had also been discussed on the previous day and a number of amendments had been agreed at the Informal Executive Board meeting.

The Deputy Director outlined the changes:

- On page 2 lines 40-42, the sentence will now read “the impact of climate change and the green transition as a policy-driven transition, rely on measures and actions taken by governments, social partners and business as well as on the wide-scale public support.”
- Page 2 line 44-45, the sentence will now read “introduction of AI in the workplace will continue to change the nature of work, skills needs and how tasks are allocated...”

- Page 3 line 49-51, the sentence will now read “governments, social partners and the EU are working in different ways to shape these transformations, introducing technology and managing change in working and living conditions.”
- Page 3, line 58, the sentence will now read “... of COVID-19 and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine there has been...”
- Page 4, a footnote will be introduced to Figure 1 to explain the empty circles and the footnote will read “the empty circles in figure 1 symbolises Eurofound capacity to be agile and commitment to respond to yet unforeseen events and context during the Programming period.”
- Page 4, line 95-96k the sentence will now read “the mega drivers are contributing to greater diversity in the population and workforce and more need for inclusion.”
- Page 5, lines 109, 110, the sentence, “this includes providing effective regulations and professionalisation” will be deleted.
- Page 6, lines 159-161, the sentence will now read “affordable and high-quality public services as well as social benefits can contribute to mitigating the impact, with a key role for reskilling. Such mitigation is a factor in public support for the transition.”
- Page 8, line 278-280, the sentence will now read “new technologies enabled by AI and machine learning are leading to the emergence of new business models, changes in work organisations and skills needs.”
- Page 11, line 398-401, the sentence will now read “...possibly older age groups. In addition to, and taking into consideration Cedefop’s work on skills, Eurofound will analyse the working conditions attached to the occupations and sectors with labour shortages, including the impact of factors such as wages and availability of childcare.”
- Page 11, line 433-434, as ‘fair’ and ‘just’ could be interpreted as different words with the same meaning, the sentence will now read “To be successful, the transition to a climate neutral economy needs to be human-centred, just and inclusive”.
- Page 12, after line 445, a sentence is inserted that reads “The use of Eurofound surveys will be explored with regard to the access to and adequacy of social protection systems.”
- Page 13, line 485-487 the sentence will now read “Fielded in 2024 the EWCS face-to-face fieldwork and push-to-web test will be evaluated to assess the quality implications, if transitioning from face-to-face to online data collection.”
- Page 13 after line 498, the sentence is included “The results of the evaluation will be presented to the Management Board and serve as a bases for further decisions.”

The Chair thanked the Deputy Director, asked for any comments and confirmed final approval from the spokespersons for the Governments, Employers, Workers and the European Commission for the Multiannual Research Programme for 2025-28.

6. Draft Programming Document 2025 (MB7/6)

- 6.1 This had also been discussed at the level of the Executive Board the previous day and members had time to reflect on this draft. Some indication on orientations came from the groups and from the Commission, and a number of amendments had been discussed already but any further written comments could be sent by 1

December. Comments, areas of concern or proposals were invited from the floor.

- 6.2 **Ms Jarc (Workers)** said that she very much appreciated that there would be more focus on people with disabilities, with extra effort being made to include them and specifically workers with disabilities in future research.
- 6.3 **Ms Hoffmann (Workers) highlighted** a few minor points.
- She asked what was the timing of the work on collective bargaining and minimum wages. As it was such a hot topic, with debate at the national level re action plans to improve collective bargaining, was there scope to accelerate some of the activities planned for 2025? It was difficult to know exactly what would come from it, as the pilot project hasn't gone through the usual Eurofound channels.
 - More information would be appreciated on the project on hybrid work whose title had been changed. Obviously, hybrid work was a topic for both social partners in particular and a challenge also for trade unions in relation to how to manage it. In discussion it became clear that it was hard to know what was actually involved in the project. It was important to build on the work that had been done about non-standard forms of employment and hybrid work etc., but also to highlight the fact that it was not purely a management issue.
 - The Commission had put forward a request about research on making work in the care sector more attractive, looking at creating career paths and improving working conditions which was welcomed by the Workers, but how had the cooperation with ELA influenced the focus? There was a much larger issue behind it, so clarification would be appreciated.
- 6.4 **Mr Ciechański (Governments)** said the Government group would present written comments by 1 December, but there would certainly be changes in 2024, with the new European Parliament and new European Commission. The main preliminary remarks were as follows:
- In studying changes in the labour market, it was important to be mindful of persons with disabilities and also to keep equality between women and men in focus;
 - Regarding the EQLS – it was understood that some topics and questions are carried over from one questionnaire to another, but it would be of interest to see what was going to be covered vis-à-vis the evolution of quality-of-life issues;
 - He suggested to harmonise with the multiannual programme, to clarify project titles so that they were less vague and actually reflected what was going to be studied.
- 6.5 **Ms Kwiatkiewicz (Employers)** agreed that the text would change later, as mentioned by the Governments. (Lines 95, 96)
- Regarding the project on care workers (lines 601, 602) - given that the data was scarce or not available - the Employers welcomed Eurofound's very reasonable approach in differentiating or writing about a distinction between public and private sector whenever data allowed for it.
 - Eurofound had been extensively working on different aspects of hybrid work, challenges and opportunities. The hybrid work and new management challenge project (table under line 620) was welcome, as it appeared to fill a gap, focusing on the management aspect.
 - Regarding the description related to Representative studies (line 662-666),

the need to be more careful with formulation was stressed, particularly that not all EU-level social partner agreements are implemented by legislative measures. Also, agreement that the consultation should be done with *'representative social partners'*, as *'legitimate relevant social partners'* was not an appropriate term.

6.6 **Mr Kanjou-Augé (European Commission)** welcomed this third draft with no major concerns and would send written comments by 1 December. One remark was that the first monitoring exercise of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee on the Council Recommendation on the fair transition had been just concluded. Therefore, the Commission would like to ensure that this exercise would build on synergies and avoid overlaps with the work in this area of Eurofound. They proposed some wording in the Programming Document to ensure that two projects which were briefly described in lines 977-979 would be discussed also with the Commission to ensure that there were no overlaps but would instead build on each other's work. Those two projects are *'the social implications of just transition and support'*, and *'evidence on the social economic impact of the transition to carbon neutral economy monitoring employment and social dimensions of the green transition'*.

6.7 **The Deputy Director** thanked the speakers for their constructive feedback on PD2025 which was still a work in progress and said she would wait for written comments.

- She heard the very strong interest in people with disabilities which has been widely discussed within Eurofound, but there was a major issue with data availability that is representative and cross-European. Consideration would be given to the possibility of exploring the area at an earlier stage than planned.
- Regarding the research on hybrid work, some exchanges were possible before the January Executive Board meeting. The initial idea was to look at management, but this could be clarified and made more meaningful for the stakeholders.
- In relation to the research on care workers, some of the issues were attractiveness of work within care work, age profile within workforce and ensuring people actually wanted to work in this sector. It was important to combine forces and cooperate with other agencies, e.g. EIGE and ELA. ELA had priority on care workers, but looking mainly at cross-border aspect, as many care workers were migrants whereas Eurofound would be looking at the more general picture and hence have a much broader scope than the cross-border aspect.
- On just transition, it would be important to have a contact person within the European Commission to discuss how to move forward and cooperate in constructive manner.

The Chair – thanked Ms Jepsen and looked forward to receiving the next draft before EB meeting in January.

7. Election of Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Management Board (MB 7/7)

The following Chair and Deputy Chairs were appointed:

Ms Rossi	Employers	Chair
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Mr Ciechański	Governments	Deputy Chair
Mr Kouwenberg	Workers	Deputy Chair
Ms Kauffmann	European Commission	Deputy Chair

8. **(Oral) report from the Committee on Staff Matters**

Mr Kanjou-Augé (Commission) updated the Board on the activities of the Committee which dealt with staff issues referred to the Management Board. One complaint on a selection procedure was referred to the Committee on Staff Matters. One candidate in a selection procedure, had not been placed on the reserve list and requested a review. The appeal was rejected by the Executive Director and the candidate filed an Article 90(2) (Staff regulations) complaint. Following examination of the file, the Committee on Staff Matters also rejected the complaint.

9. **Schedule of Meetings 2024 of the Management Board, Executive Board and Groups (MB 7/9)**

The Chair suggested that the dates be approved without final decision on formats (in-person or hybrid) which would be discussed at the Executive Board meeting in January 2024.

The draft schedule of 2024 Board meetings was adopted.

10. **Eurofound strategy for cooperation with external partners (MB 7/10)**

The Executive Director explained that Eurofound's founding regulation adopted in 2019, provides for the adoption of a strategy for cooperation with governments and international organisations. Cooperation with governments was largely with the Management Board (members), except for some work with Switzerland and Norway on the EWCS and in particular cases to top up some studies etc. Otherwise, the structure of cooperation was mostly with other agencies, with European Institutions and with some international organisations working in similar fields.

The strategy document summarised and clarified the practice already in place of cooperating with external partners including other EU agencies, international organisations, national actors, research and academic institutions. The cooperation was divided into two types, strategic cooperation and ad-hoc cooperation. Strategic cooperation was on a consistent long-term basis, with the four so-called sister agencies under DG Employment (i.e. Cedefop, EU OSHA, ETF and ELA) but also some intensive cooperation with the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) who both observe at the Management Board. Some intensive cooperation existed at expert level with OECD, but a formal agreement was needed, which was not currently their priority.

Annual action plans and framework agreements were made following the Commission's recommendations, through memoranda of understanding with the EU Agencies or cooperation frameworks with the ILO. Annual meetings took place to approve the annual plans, to review cooperation and to consider additional synergies.

An example of the second ad hoc type of cooperation was the work with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on some common themes with cross-sectoral synergy. This was done without making long term commitments for cooperation.

This strategy also clarified that Eurofound needs cooperation with other agencies, when there is a clear added value identified. This added value might be cross-sectional exchange of analysis, building synergies, better visibility or reaching additional audience that it considered to be of interest. It could involve combining data, e.g. the cooperation this year with FRA who collected data on Ukrainian refugees which Eurofound analysed in terms of integration into the labour market, social services. Another example was the positive experience of working with the ETF on projects in neighbouring non-EU countries, also using their information when working on the Eurofound country profiles for Ukrainian and Moldova, etc. Such cooperation usually required more financial and human resources, as they are very often in addition to the annual plans, so when deciding to enter into a cooperation, the benefits and resources required needed to be considered as well as how to improve synergies and maintain quality.

The Deputy Director oversaw the cooperation with other bodies and internally, the Coordinator of the specific partnerships was Martina Bisello, Research Manager, with the Executive Director also involved in annual meetings. The results and achievements of the cooperation were reported in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR). A small amendment had been introduced in the text following the Group meetings, to clarify that cooperation with other agencies was not about philosophical developments, but about providing relevant information which was trusted in quite a difficult information environment. A decision of the Management Board was appropriate in this case, so that the Board could take ownership and supervision of this particular process.

An amendment was introduced on page 9, second paragraph, so that the paragraph would read:

“Expected outcomes of the cooperation with external partners include: avoiding duplication of activities; enhancing the quality of Eurofound’s work by adopting a holistic and cross-cutting approach; improving learning and development within the organisation; consolidating and enhancing Eurofound’s reputation and credibility in a context of rising misinformation; and achieving savings through sharing of costs in a context of increasing budget constraints.”

The Management Board adopted the Strategy for Cooperation with External Partners.

11. Annual report to the Management Board by the Data Protection Officer (DPO) (MB 7/11)

Ms Aguiar, Legal & Internal Control Officer and Data Protection Officer explained that she is obliged to report her activities over the last year to the Board. Her report had been circulated in advance, so she would focus on topics considered most important.

- An important part of the DPO role was awareness raising, so on the annual Data Protection Day on 28 January a session was held - along with Eurofound’s cybersecurity officer - on the most common cyber-attacks. According to the Data Protection Regulation personal data should not be kept indefinitely - there are time limits, so simultaneously, there was a *Detox Your Data* Campaign, encouraging colleagues to delete e.g. emails from the spam folder, etc.
- A monthly newsletter was published internally on topics that relate to data protection, either relating to work or to personal lives. Topics covered this year included digital harassment and Artificial Intelligence.
- A major part of the work of DPO at Eurofound pertained to research tasks,

supporting colleagues in drafting all necessary Data Protection Notices, contracts, reviewing questionnaires prior to surveys being launched and responding to ad hoc questions from colleagues and contractors.

- She reminded members that in 2021 she carried out a data protection audit to assess the level of compliance at Eurofound. There was reasonable assurance of compliance, but twenty-five actions were identified between low priority and high priority to be followed up in order to increase the level of compliance. Twenty-four of the twenty-five actions had now been completed. The one incomplete action concerned Eurofound as a data controller and the need to assess a contractor from a data protection point of view beforehand. She was working with the procurement team to come up with a solution that did not create unnecessary burdens to the colleagues but that complied with the law.
- She was happy to say that, to the best of her knowledge (depending on information from colleagues), Eurofound had just two personal data breaches, a decrease from the previous year. Security breaches were classified as personal data breaches only if they impacted personal data. Following internal assessment, a decision was taken not to report one to the supervisor. The second data breach was unfortunately common to 33 EU Agencies or institutions and originated with a Commission service that provides services to these agencies as data processor.
- During the year ahead, one of the biggest concerns would be the use of artificial intelligence, so staff guidelines were being developed to raise awareness of the risks and limitations of using artificial intelligence. This topic would be discussed at a meeting with the DPOs from all EU Agencies and the EDPS in Strasbourg before finalisation of the guidelines.
- Another topic which would bring significant changes especially for the ICT unit would be the adoption of the EU Cyber Security Regulation (EU, Euratom 2023/2841). The role of the DPO was to ensure compliance with the cyber security regulations while not infringing the data protection regulation with regard to staff members' rights and freedom as data subjects.

The Chair thanked Ms Aguiar for presenting yet another example of how Eurofound is improving systems and compliance with regulations – also in the interest of the users.

12. Annual report to the Management Board by the Internal Control Coordinator (MB 7/12)

Ms de Boer, Internal Control Coordinator presented her report. She explained that the objectives of internal control were to provide a reasonable assurance in relation to effective and efficient operations, to make sure that reports to the Management Board and the Budgetary Authorities were based on reliable data; to safeguard assets and information in a digital world and the prevention of fraud or irregularities, as well as the adequate management of risks.

Providing this reasonable assurance relied on a very intricate ecosystem, involving many different tools, databases and controls, but the main actors were human, starting with the Management Board who played an important role in being aware of the controls and how they were implemented.

The Executive Director was accountable by signing the Internal Control annual report, but he was supported by three levels of defence to ensure this reasonable assurance.

She highlighted activities and areas for improvement this year covered in the

report.

There was a strong appetite to look more specifically at the risks around procurement and IT service security so those specific levels would be followed up more closely. The area of cyber security was becoming very important, so monitoring in that area would be improved.

In relation to the controls in the form of policy and procedure there was an initiative to streamline the research quality processes. The evidence in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) showed that the robustness of the research and also the scientific quality was not of concern, but it was important to have transparency and to streamline processes so they could be audited.

Significant work had been done to improve the data quality of the information on projects and the information that came to the Board in relation to progress on implementation of the work programme, with an adaptation of the project management system to be rolled out shortly.

Recently released guidelines from OLAF (the Commission organisation dealing with fraud issues) specifically for agencies meant that Eurofound's draft Anti-Fraud Strategy had been withdrawn from the agenda today to be redrafted and resubmitted for adoption by the Board at a later date.

In the spirit of collaboration an annual peer review of risks was carried out, discussed among the agencies under DG Employment and with DG Employment itself. She thanked the Commission for the particularly positive engagement this year.

In relation to assessments, the focus had been on financial transactions *ex-post* (after transaction has taken place). A sample was taken of the whole audit trail to see if there were errors.

An *ex-ante* evaluation was underway accompanying the programme for 2025-28 which would be reported at next year's board meeting with final approval requested for the 2025-28 programme.

A cross-agency evaluation was initiated by the European Commission in 2022 for the agencies under DG Employment (except the European Labour Authority (ELA)). The Commission were now assessing the results and the recommendations of the consultants, and conclusions and recommendations were expected in early 2024.

Of the two audits in the past two years, all recommended actions had been implemented other than two in the area of procurement that would be closed by end November 2023.

Following an IAS risk assessment, they are proposing for next year an audit of the survey management process. There were two topics in reserve; one on cyber security which might be a horizontal audit involving other agencies and a possible topic on a research quality management process.

She would share a more internally focused work plan of activities. She encouraged members to read the information on the internal control framework on the Management Board extranet pages and to contact her by email with any questions or further interest in what this work entails.

The Chair thanked Ms de Boer and took note of this report. She wished her all the best with this complex exercise and was of the opinion that Eurofound was on the right track.

14. **Advisory Committee meetings (MB 7/14)**

The dates of the Advisory Committee meetings were provided for information. The coordinators were encouraged to update Eurofound with any new nominations to the Advisory Committees.

15. AOB

15.1 Appointment of reporting officers for appraisal of Executive Director

The Board adopted a decision appointing the reporting officers for appraisal of the Executive Director as follows:

Ms Kauffmann	European Commission	Chair
Mr Närhinen	Governments	Member
Mr Ioannou	Employers	Member
Mr Kouwenberg	Workers	Member

15.2. Mr Grimmeisen confirmed that all Declarations of Interest and short CVs for all participants in the room had been received. Any members who had not yet provided their forms were reminded to do so as soon as possible.

15.3 Information on Eurofound's new website

Ms Mary McCaughey, Head of Information & Communication introduced **Mr Ian McCafferty**, Publishing and Production Manager and gave credit to all the colleagues who worked on the upgrade of the new website.

Mr McCafferty presented the website to demonstrate the improved user design and interface, and its new features and tools with quite advanced functionality, including a new e-translation tool, more accessible podcast pages, a dedicated environment for apps and databases (apps.eurofound.europa.eu) and a data explorer for surveys.

He invited members to revert with any questions. There will hopefully be the possibility of a broader presentation or training for management board members.

16. The Chair closed the meeting and thanked the members.

The next meeting of the Management board would take place in Dublin on 22 November 2024.

Chair

Executive Director

List of Participants

Last name	First Name	Group	Member State	Status
Barnas	Kristin	Governments	EFTA/EEA	Observer
Bartkiewicz	Katarzyna	Workers	Poland	Member
Bolsee	Yves	Governments	Belgium	Member
Brankov	Dimiter	Employers	Bulgaria	Member
Breathnach	Marcus	Governments	Ireland	Member
Bugeja	Josef	Workers	Malta	Alternate
Castex-Chauve	Lucile	Governments	France	Member
Ciechanski	Jerzy	Governments	Poland	Member
Ćorić	Dario	Employers	Croatia	Alternate
Dabu	Adelina	Employers	Romania	Member
Darrigrand	Sebastien	Employers	France	Member
Drbalová	Vladimíra	Employers	Czechia	Member
Drmota	Matija	Workers	Slovenia	Alternate
Farrugia	Joseph	Employers	Malta	Member
Ferrero	Celia	Employers	Spain	Member
Fugger	Harald	Governments	Austria	Member
Gibbons	Gerard	Workers	Ireland	Alternate
Gregorcova	Silvia	Governments	Slovak Republic	Member
Greis	Bob	Governments	Luxembourg	Alternate
Griñon Montes	Marina	Governments	Spain	Member
Hajnos	Miroslav	Workers	Slovak Republic	Member
Hoffmann	Aline	Workers	N/A	Observer
Ioannou	Christos	Employers	Greece	Member
Irastorza	Xabier	EU Agency - EU OSHA		Observer
Jarc	Tea	Workers	N/A	Member
Kanjou Augé	Imad	European Commission	N/A	Alternate
Karlsson	Patrik	Employers	Sweden	Member
Komel	Vladka	Governments	Slovenia	Member
Kouwenberg	Jan	Workers	Netherlands	Member
Kvederaite	Daiva	Workers	Lithuania	Member
Kwiatkiewicz	Anna	Employers	N/A	Member
Lewén	Aurora	Governments	Sweden	Member
Lofstrand	Carola	Workers	Sweden	Alternate
Luna Pavón	Antonio Miguel	Workers	Spain	Member
Magyar	Andrea	Employers	Hungary	Member
Margiotta	Rosanna	Governments	Italy	Alternate
Marra	Salvatore	Workers	Italy	Member
Messios	Orestis	Governments	Cyprus	Member
Miettinen	Katja	Employers	Finland	Member

Last name	First Name	Group	Member State	Status
Misslbeck-Winberg	Christiane	Employers	Denmark	Member
Morleo	Giovanni	Employer	Italy	Alternate
Musić Orešković	Iva	Governments	Croatia	Member
Närhinen	Antti	Governments	Finland	Member
Nicolai	Alexandra	Governments	Netherlands	Alternate
O'Hare	Pauline	Employers	Ireland	Alternate
Ortega Gonzalez	Gloria	Governments	Spain	Alternate
Oswald	Tom	Governments	Luxembourg	Member
Parmentier	Charles	Workers	France	Member
Pelei	Krisztina	Governments	Hungary	Member
Pena Costa	Marcelino	Employers	Portugal	Member
Pencs	Petra	Governments	Austria	Alternate
Pereira da Cruz	Vanda	Workers	Portugal	Member
Pietrzak	Katarzyna	Workers	Poland	Alternate
Reidy	Caroline	Observer (EU Parliament)	Ireland	Member
Reingarde	Jolanta	EU Agency - EIGE		Observer
Rodrigues	Cristina	Governments	Portugal	Member
Rohrmann	Matthias	Employers	Germany	Member
Rossi	Stefania	Employers	Italy	Member
Rudka	Andrzej	Employers	Poland	Member
Salchev	Nenko	Governments	Bulgaria	Member
Sarinova	Alexandra	Employers	Slovak Republic	Member
Skårberg	Anna	Observer (EEA/EFTA)	N/A	Observer
Skrebiskiene	Rita	Governments	Lithuania	Alternate
Slekyte	Donata	Governments	Lithuania	Member
Sloth	Lærke Thorø Borch	Governments	Denmark	Member
Smrekar	Miro	Employers	Slovenia	Member
Sonnweber	Tobias	Employers	Austria	Member
Szabolcs	Beőthy-Fehér	Workers	Hungary	Member
Tare	Ineta	Governments	Latvia	Member
Totou	Triantafyllia	Governments	Greece	Member
Ulserød	Torstein	Employers	EFTA/EEA	Observer
Van Loo	Jasper		EU Agency – Cedefop	Observer
Van Mierlo	Mario	Employers	Netherlands	Member
Vana	Vlastimil	Governments	Czechia	Member
Vaňásek	Jiří	Workers	Czechia	Member
Vella muscat	Diane	Governments	Malta	Member

Last name	First Name	Group	Member State	Status
Voigtländer	Thomas	Governments	Germany	Member
Zawadzka	Magdalena	Governments	Poland	Alternate

Also Attending

Kalfin	Ivailo	Executive Director, Eurofound
Jepsen	Maria	Deputy Director, Eurofound
Grimmeisen	Markus	Secretary to Management Board, Eurofound
Aguiar	Mafalda	Data Protection Officer, Eurofound
De Boer	Mattanja	Internal Control Coordinator, Eurofound
Weber	Tina	Staff Committee, Eurofound
		Union Syndicale, Eurofound