



Eurofound work programme 2025

Programming document 2025–2028

Supporting better policies for a strong social Europe

Eurofound work programme 2025

Programming document 2025–2028

Supporting better policies for a strong social Europe



When citing this report, please use the following wording:

Eurofound (2024), *Eurofound work programme 2025 – Programming document 2025–2028: Supporting better policies for a strong social Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024

PDF: ISBN 978-92-897-2453-1 ISSN:2363-3166 doi:10.2806/5227783 TJ-01-25-000-EN-N

This report and any associated materials are available online at <https://eurofound.link/ef24034>

© European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2024

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the Eurofound copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Cover images: © goodluz, Dmitry Borovikov/Stocksy, M.Dörr & M.Frommherz, 24K-Production/Adobe Stock

Any queries on copyright must be addressed in writing to: copyright@eurofound.europa.eu

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Telephone: (+353 1) 204 31 00

Email: information@eurofound.europa.eu

Web: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu>

Contents

	Foreword	1
	Who we are	3
I	General context	5
	General developments: Mega-drivers	5
	EU policies	5
	Stakeholder priorities	6
	New priorities and tasks building on existing work	7
	Resource limitations	7
II	Multiannual programme 2025–2028 and work programme 2025	9
	1. Strategic objectives	9
	2. Approach	9
	3. Cooperation and partnership	12
	4. Expected results	13
	5. Performance monitoring system	14
	6. Activities	15
	Activity 1: Working conditions and sustainable work	15
	Activity 2: Industrial relations and social dialogue	18
	Activity 3: Employment and labour markets	21
	Activity 4: Living conditions and quality of life	23
	Activity 5: Survey management and development	25
	Activity 6: Communication	27
	7. Human and financial resources outlook: Resource programming 2025–2028	29
	Annexes	33
	Annex I: Organisation chart	48
	Annex II: Resource allocation per activity	49
	Annex III: Financial resource allocation	50
	Annex IV: Human resources quantitative	57
	Annex V: Human resources qualitative	63
	Annex VI: Environment management	75
	Annex VII: Building Policy	77
	Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities	79
	Annex IX: Performance monitoring system and evaluation	80
	Annex X: Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems	84
	Annex XI: Plan for grant, contribution or service-level agreements	88

Abbreviations used in this document

ABAC	accrual-based accounting	ETF	European Training Foundation
AD	administrator	EUAN	EU Agencies Network
AI	artificial intelligence	EU-LFS	European Union Labour Force Survey
AST	assistant	EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
AST/SC	secretary/clerk	EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
CA	contract agent	Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
CATI	computer-assisted telephone interviewing	EWCS	European Working Conditions Survey
CdT	Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union	EWCTS	European Working Conditions Telephone Survey
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training	FG	Function Group
CEOS	Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union	FFR	framework financial regulation
CSRs	country-specific recommendations	FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
DG BUDG	Directorate-General for Budget	FTE	full-time equivalent
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	HR	human resources
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	HRDP	Human Resources Development Plan
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	IAS	Internal Audit Service
ECS	European Company Survey	ICT	information and communications technology
EEA	European Environment Agency	ILO	International Labour Organization
EFC	Economic and Financial Committee	IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	IT	information technology
EGF	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers	KPI	key performance indicator
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality	NEC	Network of Eurofound Correspondents
EJM	European Jobs Monitor	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ELA	European Labour Authority	SES	Structure of Earnings Survey
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme	SHARE	Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe
EMCO	Employment Committee	SLA	service-level agreement
EPMS	Eurofound performance monitoring system	SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office	SNE	seconded national expert
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey	SPC	Social Protection Committee
ERL	electronic reserve list	TA	temporary agent
ERM	European Restructuring Monitor	TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
ESENER	European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks		
ESF	European Social Fund		
ESS	European Social Survey		

Foreword

The launch of this new multiannual programming document for 2025–2028, *Supporting better policies for a strong social Europe*, follows closely upon the 2024 election of a new European Parliament and the appointment of a new European Commission with a new set of strategic goals guided by three key priorities: a free and democratic Europe, a strong and secure Europe, and a prosperous and competitive Europe.

The forthcoming four years covered by this programme will see Europe continue to undergo a deep economic transformation driven by a range of critical mega-drivers, not least climate action and digitalisation. The international context may prove disruptive, however; with a war on Europe's borders, a conflict in the Middle East and intensifying geopolitical tension alongside a reconfiguration of global trade, the risk of external shocks is ever present. Internally, changing demography has implications for Member States' ability to generate growth and sustain their public finances.

No European will be untouched by the changes that lie ahead, and the risk of potential growing inequalities – gender, age, income and geographical – will be a constant challenge for policymakers and decision-makers at both EU and national levels. The challenge for the EU institutions will be to strive to harness the opportunities presented by the social, economic and technological shifts while defusing the threats, with the goal of strengthening the European way of life and competitiveness built on productive and innovative companies as well as public services able to create high employment, quality jobs, decent quality of life and equal opportunities for all citizens.

2025 will also mark a significant milestone for Eurofound itself. For 50 years, the Agency has been a trusted source of scientifically sound evidence throughout the EU for the development of policies to improve the lives and work of Europeans. Over five decades, it has produced a unique body of work comprising multidisciplinary comparative social research from across the Member States. As the Agency embarks on its next phase, energised by what it has learned and building on the strengths it has developed over these years, it will continue supporting policymakers in the EU institutions, the social partners and national governments in responding to the challenges above by providing reliable, objective and comparative data and analysis. It will do so with renewed commitment, embracing new digital opportunities, exploring optimal partnerships, and using innovative tools to enhance both research and communication initiatives to provide relevant, timely and high-quality knowledge spanning the social, employment and work-related domains.

This document presents the Agency's programme of work for the next four years, guided by a new set of strategic objectives. We look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders throughout the year, responding to their needs in an agile and user-oriented manner, as we deliver the evidence and analysis required to improve living and working conditions for all Europeans.

Ivailo Kalfin
Executive Director

Who we are

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite agency of the European Union established in 1975. Its Founding Regulation was updated in 2019. Its mandate reaches across four policy areas, which are analysed in a holistic manner: living conditions, employment policies, working conditions and industrial relations.

Our **mission** is to provide knowledge to support the development of better-informed social, employment and work-related policies in the EU through data collection, comparative research and user-centred communication.

Our **vision** is to be Europe's leading knowledge source for better life and work.

Our **founding objective** is to provide the EU institutions and bodies, Member States and the social partners with data and analytical support for shaping and implementing policies concerning living and working conditions, devising employment policies, and promoting the dialogue between management and labour.

Our **tasks** include collecting data on relevant socioeconomic developments; carrying out research, including comparative and trend analysis; providing evidence and services for policymaking; analysing developments in the industrial relations system; facilitating knowledge sharing among and between the EU, national governments and the social partners; providing forums for the exchange of experience among stakeholders; and managing and making available tools and datasets to policymakers, the social partners and other stakeholders.

Our **values** guide our work to support the improvement of living and working conditions in the EU. These include being:

- committed to professional excellence, innovation, agility and continuous learning
- open to collaboration, seeking synergies and added value
- engaged with stakeholders and decision-makers in tripartite settings
- transparent in communicating our work
- steadfast in upholding European public service standards for conduct and integrity
- responsive to the green and digital transition in our work organisation
- attentive to maintaining a safe work environment, committed to a culture of trust and respect

I | General context

General developments: Mega-drivers

The EU economy has come out of the past five years of polycrisis with a robust labour market and a patchy record in terms of growth pattern. The sharp increase in energy prices in 2022 and the ensuing rising inflation gave rise to an early economic stagnation during 2023, with a barely growing economy in some countries and recession in others, despite falling energy prices and easing of supply constraints. Against this pessimistic backdrop, the outlook for 2024 is slightly more optimistic, with almost all Member States expected to return to growth, albeit below their potential. Inflation, having remained persistently high, is set to slow. It continues, however, to create big challenges for companies and has eroded the purchasing power of citizens, as wage increases are lagging, and real wages are not expected to reach their 2021 levels before 2025. Both internal and external demand remain subdued, and the private investment rate is weak. With the focus of the European Semester having shifted towards aligning with the provisions of the EU's reformed economic governance framework, Member States will be preparing medium-term fiscal structural plans, setting out expenditure paths, priority reforms and investments in line with the economic governance framework. This is also expected to frame governments' capacity to invest. Meanwhile, indicators show that the previous tightening of monetary policy is continuing to work its way through the economy, and global risks are on the increase, with two wars in the neighbourhood and mounting geopolitical tensions.

Employment growth has continued to be dynamic, with unemployment remaining low and labour markets tight as labour supply lags labour demand in many sectors.

It is within this context that the EU is meeting the challenges and opportunities that arise from the mega-drivers: demographic change, climate change, technological change, and re-globalisation and geopolitical reconfiguration. These four mega-drivers are having a transformative impact on living and working conditions as well as on employment. As the last five years have shown, the EU, Member States, governments and the social partners are stepping up to the challenges posed by the mega-drivers and addressing their impact on the work and lives of EU workers and citizens.

EU policies

2025 marks the first year of the five-year period of the EU policy and legislative cycle for 2025–2029. Following the June 2024 European Parliament elections, the newly re-appointed President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, presented the political guidelines for the next European Commission, covering 2024–2029, on 18 July 2024. The political guidelines set out seven priority areas: A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness; A new era for European Defence and Security; Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model; Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature; Protecting our democracy, upholding our values; A global Europe: leveraging our power and partnerships; and Delivering together and preparing our union for the future.

Many of the 2019–2024 EU priorities¹ remain valid, as the challenges outlined remain pertinent, including the challenges of digital and green transformation, demographic change, and strengthening the EU economy while securing jobs and reducing inequalities.

These challenges are, however, taking place in a changed geopolitical landscape, with increased tensions and war in the immediate neighbourhood.

While the political guidelines are not the complete work programme, they do set out a host of initiatives that are of particular relevance for shaping the work of Eurofound. To mention a few: the new Action Plan on the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with its focus on the impact of digitalisation on the world of work; a quality jobs roadmap; a pact for European social dialogue; the EU anti-poverty strategy; a European affordable housing plan; a focus on the root causes of demographic change and its implications; intergenerational fairness, paying particular attention to youth mental health; and equality. These are themes that are anchored in Eurofound's work programme.

The political guidelines also put an emphasis on renewed efforts for a so-called data revolution, with a promise to put forward a European data strategy to enable further exploitation of the untapped potential of data.

1 https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024_en

In addition to the themes listed above, the Digital Decade and the European Green Deal, with its emphasis on a just transition, and the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality will continue to frame the transition to net zero by 2050, with the ambition of leaving no one behind. The Digital Services Act and the European Artificial Intelligence Act will set the frame for digital development in Europe over the next decades. This will be complemented with a focus on competitiveness and a Clean Industrial Deal. Enlargement will also continue to play a key role, with the adoption of the Enlargement Package in 2023 providing a detailed assessment of the state of play and the progress made by the Western Balkans, Türkiye, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on their respective paths towards the EU and the appointment of a Commissioner responsible for enlargement and the pre-enlargement policy review.

Furthermore, the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe will have an impact on what priorities will dominate the EU agenda for 2024–2029, including reflections on proposals that call for Europe to focus on delivering social protection and fairness, while upholding its values and the rule of law.²

Stakeholder priorities

European institutions

The European Commission will build on its strong commitment to implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights as well as achieving progress on the 2030 targets. The adoption of key pieces of legislation including directives on the minimum wage, pay transparency and the working conditions of platform workers, the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality and the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union, as well as the launch of a range of initiatives including those on care, the social economy and strengthening social dialogue will contribute to maintaining and improving upward social and economic convergence. Following the communication stemming from the Conference on the Future of Europe, some of the areas that the Commission pledged to explore further include: supporting regions in development traps experiencing persistent low growth; making industry sustainable, digital and resilient, and addressing dependencies; addressing the demographic transition, notably on ageing and depopulation; an integrated approach to measuring and monitoring well-being beyond gross

domestic product (GDP); ensuring a fair transition to climate neutrality; and mental health. In March 2024, the Commission presented an action plan to tackle labour and skills shortages, proposing to work with Member States and the social partners to address relevant issues over the coming months and years. The action plan (a key deliverable of the 2023 European Year of Skills) is part of the EU's strategy to boost its competitiveness and enhance its economic and social resilience.

The Commission put forward an initiative with the overall objective of improving working conditions for trainees – including pay, inclusiveness and quality of traineeships in the EU – through a proposal for a Directive on improving and enforcing working conditions for trainees and combating regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships and a proposal to revise the 2014 Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships, to address issues of quality and inclusiveness, such as fair pay and access to social protection. The incoming European Parliament and the Council will start working on these proposals once the new policy cycle begins, as well as continuing to work on the Commission proposal on the revision of the European Works Councils. Work will also continue on the right to disconnect; the consultation with the European social partners started at the end of April 2024.

The policy agenda of the newly elected European Parliament will start to take shape. While the Parliament will work on the initiatives put forward by the Commission, it will also undertake political initiatives through its own legislative and non-legislative reports. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union does not provide for legislative initiatives by the Parliament, but the current Commission committed to take on board legislative priorities set out by the Parliament.

Finally, the strategic agenda for 2024–2029 adopted by the European Council in June 2024 sets out three main themes: a strong and secure Europe, a prosperous and competitive Europe, and a free and democratic Europe. The strategy concludes with a strong emphasis on the social dimension of the internal market and the aims of strengthening social dialogue, upholding equal opportunities and reducing inequalities. Increasing participation in the labour market and promoting youth employment will be of key importance in the coming years.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A404%3AFIN>

European cross-industry social partners

At the time of drafting this programming document, the forthcoming outcomes of the European cross-industry social partners' joint activities within their ongoing work programme include a framework of actions related to the green transition; a joint statement regarding the follow-up of the existing Framework of Actions on Youth Employment; and joint guidelines on work-related privacy and surveillance.

On 31 January 2024, the European Commission, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European social partners signed the Tripartite Declaration for a Thriving European Social Dialogue at the Val Duchesse Social Partners Summit. The declaration stands for a renewed commitment to strengthen social dialogue at EU level and to join forces in addressing key challenges in economies and labour markets. To this end, the signatories of the declaration committed to undertake the following: addressing labour and skills shortages; putting European social dialogue at the heart of our future; establishing a European Social Dialogue Envoy; and launching a Pact for European Social Dialogue.

The preparation of the eighth European social partners' work programme covering 2025–2027 will start this year.

New priorities and tasks building on existing work

Over the past few years, Eurofound's work has expanded to include a number of 'new' tasks dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war of aggression on Ukraine and the increasing cost of living. These tasks have been prioritised within existing resources and have given rise to a way of working that is more agile, in particular with regard to the capacity to collect data and disseminate the analysis within a short time span. This has increased the demand for input from Eurofound. Eurofound welcomes this opportunity, but it leads to an increased workload and requires the Agency to be agile at all stages of the process, particularly the early programming stages.

In 2023, Eurofound was awarded the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) certificate and in 2024, the ISO 14001 certificate for environmental management (see Annex VI for more details). The Agency is now putting in place annual plans in order to contribute to meeting net-zero targets and to maintain these certifications.

In coordination and cooperation with the Commission, Eurofound is in the process of moving from the current financial management system, ABAC, to a new one called SUMMA. This has both financial and human

resource implications in the transition phase. It should be noted that the considerable transition costs are not covered within the budget of this programming document.

Strengthening Eurofound's capabilities with regard to cybersecurity is requiring extra efforts in the interest of the Agency and in order to comply with EU standards and regulations.

The digital-first strategy is responding to changing user demands and is putting more emphasis on data visualisation and the possibility of providing more customised information to users.

The latest developments regarding the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) in different areas of life create new opportunities and challenges for research, including issues related to data protection and the reliability of data.

Resource limitations

Eurofound's subsidy for 2025–2027 is, in principle, covered by the Union's current multiannual financial framework 2021–2027. For the last year of this programming cycle, another modest increase of the subsidy has been included.

Due to the exceptional increase in the Irish country coefficient in the years since 2019 (from 119.2 in 2019 to 136.3 in 2023, equal to an annual cost increase of about €1.9 million), an additional subsidy amount of €650,000 was granted from 2023 on to partially mitigate the mentioned cost increase, which cannot be influenced by Eurofound. For the planning years, a continuation of the current level of the Irish country coefficient and the annual subsidy top-up is assumed. Additionally, and similar to most other agencies, Eurofound was granted an annual fixed subsidy increase of €453,000 from 2023 on to counter the inflationary pressure on the expenditure side. Due to further substantial increases in staff costs in 2024, based on Eurostat calculations, another increase in the subsidy of €276,000 for 2024 and €380,000 from 2025 on has been granted to Eurofound and other institutions, agencies and bodies. However, further inflationary pressure at all levels of the budget and a high Irish country coefficient are expected during the planning years so that the gap between revenue and the cost increases in all titles will remain and might jeopardise the Agency's capacity to deliver on its mandate at the expected level.

As a consequence, Eurofound foresees an ongoing and very significant increase in Title 1 (staff expenditure), which cannot be countered uniquely by internal efficiency measures. A drop in the operational expenditure (Title 3) is, therefore, to be expected to ensure a balanced budget over the planning years.

To reverse this trend of a shrinking Title 3, all efforts should be undertaken to have a realistic adjustment of Eurofound’s resource needs in preparation for the next multiannual financial framework of the Union. Furthermore, possibilities to generate additional income by rendering services to external stakeholders need to be further progressed.

Eurofound’s establishment plan is expected to be kept stable at the level of 91 posts. Additional posts would be impossible to finance, while a reduction in posts is also unrealistic at the current level of workload and ambition of the Agency.

II Multiannual programme 2025–2028 and work programme 2025

The policy ambitions underpinning the EU strategic goals are multifaceted and complex. Eurofound will provide research-based insights into the interconnected factors at play by drawing on its multidisciplinary approach to address policy-relevant questions.

Eurofound's expertise lies in strong comparative analysis, which is based on the collection of high-quality, reliable and comparable data and evidence on how policy measures work out. The Agency facilitates knowledge sharing among and between EU and national actors. It engages with stakeholders using a rich set of tools and channels. Where clear complementarities and added value exist, it will foster cooperation with other partners.

Eurofound will harness its experience and expertise to further improve on fulfilling its mission notwithstanding its resource limitations. For the period of this four-year programme, three strategic objectives will guide programme implementation (Section 1). All areas of the organisation will work together towards achieving these objectives. This is set out in the approaches (Sections 2 and 3) and activities (Section 6). The expected results, described in Section 4, act as signposts towards achieving the objectives. Key performance indicators (KPIs) and other monitoring tools will gauge and evaluate whether all is on track.

1. Strategic objectives

1. Deliver sound, evidence-based, policy-relevant research

- Drawing on its multidisciplinary team of experts and a network of correspondents in all EU Member States, Eurofound will provide in-depth quantitative and qualitative evidence-based analysis that equips our stakeholders with a deep understanding of the selected topics of interest, the driving forces and the policy implications.
- Timely access to high-quality representative survey data is key to ensuring Eurofound's role as a leading knowledge provider. Eurofound will continue investing in the capacity to collect, process and manage high-quality, reliable and comparable data across the EU.
- Eurofound will cooperate with external partners where synergies in knowledge creation can be established.

2. Ensure engagement with research findings through responsive, user-centric communication

- In a context of data abundance and increased competition in information provision, Eurofound will prioritise communication channels and formats that maximise uptake and secure its credibility.
- To better serve the information needs of stakeholders, Eurofound will develop partnerships with other organisations based on complementarities and shared areas of expertise.

3. Adhere to the high standards of EU public administration for conduct, integrity and quality of work

- Guided by good corporate governance and staff involvement in decision making, the aspiration in implementing Eurofound tasks is to meet the highest standards in terms of integrity, reliability and accountability.

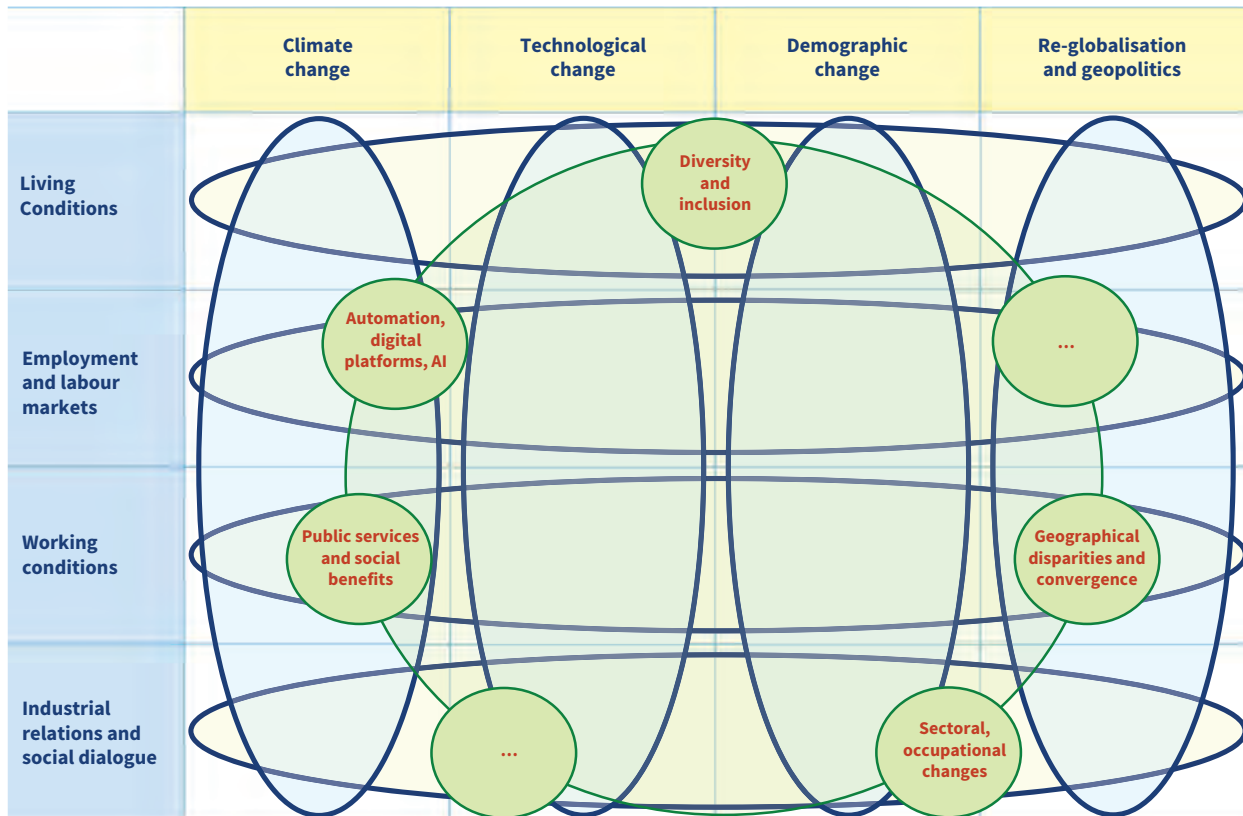
2. Approach

Research approach

The priorities of the multiannual work programme for 2025–2028 are shaped by the opportunities and challenges arising from four mega-drivers: demographic change, climate change, technological change, and global political and economic trends. The priorities reflect the uncertainty linked to how the mega-drivers will impact the EU, as well as the unpredictability of the context and the climate of polycrisis. This uncertainty is compounded by the expected change in the policy agenda that may occur after the European Parliament elections in 2024 and the election of a new College of the European Commission. In light of this, Eurofound must, while setting out a path for its research activities for 2025–2028, build flexibility into its multiannual work programme and adjust it to an evolving global context, a changing policy agenda and a new financial reality.

Drawing on lessons learned from the two previous programming periods, Eurofound will focus on the four policy areas mandated by its Founding Regulation – working conditions, industrial relations, employment and living conditions – and will continue to support its stakeholders by providing evidence as input to their policy action. While focusing on its core expertise, Eurofound will adopt a systemic approach to its analysis and ensure that the priorities identified are treated in a transversal manner. In other words, when constructing

Figure 1: The matrix approach



Note: The empty circles symbolise Eurofound’s capacity to be agile and its commitment to respond to unforeseen events and contexts during the programming period.

the work programme (both multiannual and annual), Eurofound will apply a matrix where each mega-driver is analysed and understood from the point of view of its impact on the policy areas, thereby providing a holistic response to the issues at hand. While all four mega-drivers will have an impact, some pose greater challenges than others.

This approach seeks to understand the transformative changes the mega-drivers are having on employment and working and living conditions, as well as the continuous and new policy challenges they pose. Industrial relations are stepping up to the changes and hence are shaping how the mega-drivers are impacting the four core areas of expertise.

While the four mega-drivers impact individually on work and life, many of the opportunities and challenges faced by today’s societies are due to the compounded impacts of all four mega-drivers, which are difficult to disentangle. For policymakers to address these compounded challenges in a holistic way, they have to be examined from different angles: How do they impact on living conditions and quality of life? How do they impact on employment and the labour market? What are the implications for working conditions? How are industrial relations affected, and how can social dialogue help to find solutions?

These compounded effects will be particularly visible via five key dimensions:

- diversity in the population and the workforce and the need for inclusion
- sectoral and occupational changes
- automation, use of digital platforms and AI
- public services and social benefits
- geographical disparities, with implications for upward convergence and cohesion

These five dimensions (diversity in the population and the workforce and the need for inclusion; sectoral and occupational changes; automation, use of digital platforms and AI; public services and social benefits; geographical disparities, with implications for upward convergence and cohesion) shape and are shaped by the four mega-drivers and provide a lens through which their impact on employment, work, life and industrial relations can be understood and assessed in a holistic manner. Within each dimension, the impact of climate change and the green transition is given a particular focus in light of the profound changes that are likely to arise. This approach is described more in detail in the [multiannual research programme 2025–2028](#). Likewise, the mega-drivers will shape the preferences and behaviours of citizens and vice-versa, making it

important to understand these changing preferences and behaviours in order to appreciate the impact of policy measures, as well as adherence to and trust in the actors and institutions managing the transitions.

The challenges outlined above do not impact equally across the EU nor across the population, and the distributional impacts, and hence the impact on inequalities (economic, social and territorial), will be a focus point. Eurofound will continue to ensure that its analysis has a focus on specific groups as well as the intersectionality of groups in society. Gender will be mainstreamed in its analysis where relevant, and particular focus will be put on young people, older workers and migrants, while acknowledging the different types of migrants and hence the need for different policies. Eurofound will conduct specific projects on these groups and will also present data and findings for these groups in projects examining a broader section of society. In particular, Eurofound will ensure that people with disabilities are included in the research programme where data allows for it, investigating, for example, the job quality of workers with disabilities and the role of supported-employment policies and practices.

Eurofound will continue to rely on its ability to gather high-quality policy-relevant data and monitor developments. The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) will have been fielded in the previous programming period, and during this programming period the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) will be fielded and the European Company Survey (ECS) prepared. In addition, the e-survey will continue to provide up-to-date context-relevant data, and EU PolicyWatch will record policy measures, including the form the social partners' involvement takes. The European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) will provide information on restructuring and be used to capture emerging changes across key economic sectors, and the European Jobs Monitor (EJM) and the platform economy repository will continue to monitor developments. Eurofound will continue to investigate alternative data sources, such as administrative data and big data, as well as improving data storage and visualisation.

Eurofound will carry out both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The Network of Eurofound Correspondents (NEC) will continue to provide up-to-date data on a host of topics and, in particular, to ensure that the social partners' perspective is captured. As a rule, the research questions will drive the methodology and hence whether qualitative, quantitative or a mix of both methods are to be applied. Particular attention will be given to incorporating forward-looking methodologies such as foresight and future studies. While measuring, understanding and assessing the past is vital to assess appropriate ways forward, likewise projecting the future can provide

insights that present options that are relevant for policy, in particular in periods of uncertainty and great transformation.

Communication approach

Eurofound's communication strategy provides the framework for all communication activity and planning. The communication context in which the Agency operates is changing: an intensifying policy agenda to tackle urgent issues; ever-evolving information ecosystems driven by digital and AI advancements; and intensifying competition for attention in an increasingly online world. Policymakers' communication preferences and expectations are evolving in response. Eurofound's mission in this evolving context is to adopt an agile, innovative and adaptive approach to best reach, serve and engage with these decision-makers.

Eurofound's primary goal remains to ensure EU-level decision-makers are best served with the highest-quality, timely, policy-relevant information to help improve living and working conditions. Eurofound will do this in the most appropriate and effective manner, building on the existing suite of tools and channels – including publications, data stories and visualisation, events, webinars, and podcasts – and taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the new digital communication environment. The Agency will continue to exploit its capacity to distil and communicate complex, evidence-based information and provide an expert narrative in the relevant key areas.

Against this background, three key objectives provide the framework for the corporate communication approach during the programming period 2025–2028.

- Ensure a policy-relevant focus in all communication outputs.
- Consolidate an agile and responsive digital-first approach to content production and dissemination, prioritising access to research expertise and data.
- Foster collaborative partnerships for communication with EU institutions, agencies, social partners, international organisations, civil society, think-tanks and other multipliers.

To achieve its objectives, Eurofound has adopted five guiding principles for its communications.

1. Eurofound is proactive in communicating its work in line with the policy agendas of the EU institutions and social partners at EU level, taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by today's digital communication environment.
2. The Agency adopts an agile, timely, responsive and user-oriented approach to ensuring EU-level decision-makers are best served with relevant high-quality, timely, policy-relevant information. Defining the target groups' information needs is at the heart of Eurofound's user-centric approach to

communication. Important also is determining the appropriate communication channels and format.

3. Eurofound reaches out to the national level where it concerns implementation of EU policy at national level or where it can contribute comparative information on issues relevant at European level.
4. Eurofound respects the role of multilingualism in communicating across the EU, continuing to take a pragmatic and cost-effective approach to this process.
5. Eurofound measures and evaluates its efforts to communicate using clear indicators and performance monitoring and will actively seek to improve its work by integrating the results.

The [communication strategy](#) sets out the strategy for 2025–2028.

3. Cooperation and partnership

Working in partnership and facilitating cooperation with related agencies and European and national-level institutions as well as international organisations are essential components of the programme implementation. Eurofound’s priorities and approach regarding cooperation and partnership are outlined in a separate [strategy document](#).

EU agencies

Eurofound is tasked with facilitating and promoting cooperation with other EU agencies. Through annual action plans, opportunities for synergies are explored and agreed as part of programme development. Such cooperation takes place with six agencies: the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the European Labour Authority (ELA), the European Training Foundation (ETA) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). For example, Eurofound will explore cooperation with EU-OSHA on psychosocial risks during 2025 and 2026 using the EWCS 2024 (survey on workers) and the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) 2024 (survey on companies). Cooperation with ELA on issues around ‘virtual labour mobility’ will be sought. With other agencies – currently two, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) – specific and well-defined cooperation takes place. To further the cooperation, Eurofound signed a memorandum of understanding with the EEA in October 2024. Eurofound is also endeavouring to share administrative services with interested agencies. Through the European Union Agency Network (EUAN), Eurofound benefits from sharing practices and services to avoid overlap and inefficiencies.

EU institutions

Where new studies are required in support of policy decisions, Eurofound will have the knowledge and expertise to contribute to the European Commission (including the Joint Research Centre), the European Parliament and the European Court of Auditors in the form of once-off expertise in meetings, ad hoc studies or pilot projects. Eurofound is currently exploring with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) its envisaged role in the research network for analysing and promoting EU social dialogue announced in the Communication from the European Commission of 25 January 2023 on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union.

Member State level

Collaboration has a clear win-win where Eurofound provides an EU-wide analytical perspective on highly relevant and specific policy issues at Member State level. Member States will be invited to participate in the probability-based surveys through financing increases in the survey samples to allow for in-depth national analyses.

Third countries and international organisations

During the programme period, Eurofound will continue to implement the contribution agreement signed between Eurofound and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) in May 2023 for the provision of knowledge to support better-informed social, employment and work-related policies in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. Covering a period of 36 months up to May 2026, the agreement includes three main tasks: data collection, comparative analysis and knowledge exchange. Using data collected as part of Eurofound’s own surveys, comparative analyses on specific and relevant topics will allow these countries not only to compare themselves with others but also to monitor their own developments in living and working conditions over time. Participation in the Tripartite Exchange Seminar 2024, network meetings such as the annual meeting of the NEC and smaller expert meetings has facilitated knowledge exchange covering all policy areas of Eurofound’s mandate while also familiarising participants with Eurofound’s mandate and tripartite governance. Cooperation with the ETF is sought. Implementation is financed via earmarked funds and is noted here for information purposes only. The resources involved are included in Annex XI.

To conform with Article 30.3 of the Founding Regulation, the Management Board has adopted a [strategy for relations with third countries and international organisations](#) covering the programme period, including cooperation with international organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the European University Institute.

Environmental management

During the programme period, Eurofound is committed to maintaining its EMAS registration (first attained in 2021) and its newly acquired ISO 14001 certification. To that end, Eurofound will continue to reduce carbon emissions by reducing energy consumption and travel.

Furthermore, water and paper consumption will be monitored and reduced through infrastructure and awareness projects. In 2024, Eurofound installed solar panels to increase the share of renewable energy in its total energy use.

The Eurofound campus contributes to carbon entrapment through managed meadowlands and woodlands. Eurofound will explore further ecological benefits by means of local partnerships and biodiversity projects.

Sustainability reporting linking Eurofound's progress with internationally recognised reporting standards will be introduced to ensure a high level of transparency and consistency.

Further details can be found in Annex VI.

4. Expected results

Table 1: Eurofound's strategic objectives and expected results

Strategic objectives	Expected results: Signposting progress towards achieving the objectives
<p>1. Deliver sound, evidence-based, policy-relevant research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The work programme corresponds to the needs of stakeholders as a result of close cooperation in work programme development. ◦ The delivery of the research programme is based on robust research designs and transparent quality standards. ◦ Forward-looking, scientifically sound methodologies are used to better respond to stakeholder needs in times of complex change.
<p>2. Ensure engagement with research findings through responsive, user-centric communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The preferences and accessibility requirements of multiple and diverse audiences, including but not limited to policymakers, researchers and the media, are met through the use of digital communication in presenting Eurofound research findings, data and analysis. The agility in processes necessary for timely communication is strengthened, supporting the visibility and uptake of research findings. ◦ Partnerships in knowledge creation and communication are of mutual benefit and of additional value for the stakeholders.
<p>3. Adhere to the high standards of EU public administration for conduct, integrity and quality of work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Internal checks and controls as well as external audits demonstrate that the internal control framework is operating efficiently and effectively as per the Staff Regulations and financial management. ◦ Well-functioning dialogue between staff and management is upheld by the principles of transparency, accountability and participation. It is based on a track record of a joint approach to identifying and tackling issues that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ fosters the job quality of staff ◦ promotes an organisational culture with respect for diversity and inclusiveness ◦ supports a sustainable approach to the environmental, social and economic dimensions of well-being in all aspects of Eurofound's work

5. Performance monitoring system

Section 1 in Chapter 2 sets out the strategic objectives guiding the use of Eurofound’s resources and experience in delivering on its mandate in line with the principle of sound financial management. In the subsequent sections, the approach to the implementation of the objectives is outlined and what is hoped to be the result of Eurofound’s interventions. This can be captured in the so-called intervention logic shown in Figure 2.

Eurofound is using various instruments to monitor, analyse and report on its performance towards achieving the strategic objectives and expected results. The Eurofound performance monitoring system (EPMS) aims to foster a culture of continuous organisational improvement using a series of instruments such as KPIs and metrics, user feedback, qualitative assessment and analysis, evaluation and learning. This approach supports the periodic external evaluation organised by the European Commission.³

Key performance indicators

The KPIs for this programme will focus on the effective and efficient use of human and financial resources, indicated by budget implementation, full use of posts available in the establishment plan and programme

delivery. They will also include results indicators to monitor the relevance (and timeliness) of Eurofound’s research in supporting policy development and debate through the uptake of Eurofound’s expertise in European level-policy documents and engagement with stakeholders in meetings and events. Finally, they will include indicators on the uptake of Eurofound knowledge through its information channels. On the basis of the results of these indicators, and in combination with other performance information, Eurofound will actively seek to improve its performance continuously.

See Annex IX for further details on the EPMS.

Strategy for organisational management and internal control

Eurofound’s strategic objectives require efficient and effective organisational performance. It helps to identify actions for organisational development.

Eurofound applies an internal control framework based on the model from the European Commission. It is designed to provide reasonable assurance in the achievement of five objectives of sound financial management as per Article 30, Section 2 of Eurofound’s financial regulation: (1) effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; (2) reliability of reporting; (3) safeguarding of assets and information; (4) prevention,

Figure 2: 2025–2028 programme intervention logic



³ Ex article 28.2 of Regulation (EU) 2019/127.

detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and (5) adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

See Annex X for further details.

6. Activities

Eurofound’s research priorities for 2025–2028 are shaped by the opportunities and challenges arising from the mega-drivers. By focusing on the four policy areas mandated in the Founding Regulation – working conditions, industrial relations, employment and living conditions – and continuing to collect high-quality survey data, Eurofound aims to support its stakeholders by providing evidence that can assist their policy action.

The programming document 2025–2028 will be implemented through the six operational activities listed below.

1. **Working conditions and sustainable work:** Providing comparative data and analysis that can be used to improve job quality and promote sustainability of work over the life course in a labour market characterised by transformative changes.
2. **Industrial relations and social dialogue:** Functioning as a centre of expertise for monitoring and analysing developments in industrial relations and social dialogue at European and national levels and promoting dialogue between management and labour. The activity responds to the need to support social dialogue and provide comparative data on national institutional settings and developments as well as European-level developments.
3. **Employment and labour markets:** Providing knowledge to identify structural changes in the labour market and to inform employment policies to improve the functioning and inclusiveness of a rapidly changing labour market.
4. **Living conditions and quality of life:** Mapping and analysing key elements for the improvement of the living conditions of people, including perceptions of quality of life and society.
5. **Survey management and development:** Providing high-quality comparable survey data on living and working conditions as well as on workplace practices in European companies; ensuring a long-term strategy for the surveys and exploring alternative data-collection methods.
6. **Corporate communication:** Ensuring that Eurofound’s knowledge reaches the relevant actors at EU and national levels to help shape and implement better policies in the core areas of the Agency’s remit.

All activities will contribute to the strategic objectives of Eurofound. Moreover, building on lessons learned from the previous programming period and in order to respond in an agile manner to emerging issues and stakeholders’ ad hoc requests, Eurofound will reserve some flexible capacity.

While the work programme is presented according to activities, the programming of most projects cuts across activity areas in order to ensure a holistic approach. For example, the projects on sectors involve contributions from the Working conditions and sustainable work, Industrial relations and social dialogue, and Employment and labour markets activities; the projects on care involve contributions from the Working conditions and sustainable work, Industrial relations and social dialogue, Employment and labour markets, and Living conditions and quality of life activities. Hence, the different activities will contribute to more transversal and holistic projects; these projects are marked with a * in the project listings that follow. The annual work programme operationalises the [multiannual research programme 2025–2028](#) as adopted by the Management Board on 17 November 2023.

Activity 1: Working conditions and sustainable work

Multiannual perspective

Overview

The high-quality data of the EWCS 2024 will be the starting point for investigating – from the perspective of working conditions and job quality – the challenges deriving from the combined impact of the four mega-drivers: demographic change, climate change, technological change and (re)-globalisation. This will be complemented by evidence on measures – introduced through public policies and legislation, the intervention of the social partners, and practices at workplace level – designed to address the challenges and improve working conditions. By applying forward-looking methodologies, emerging changes will be captured, for example regarding people’s preferences as to how they want to work in the future and if and how the role of work in people’s lives is changing.

Objectives

- To provide evidence on the working conditions of different groups of workers and the factors that can support inclusion and the successful functioning of an increasingly diverse workforce
- To provide evidence on the impact of sectoral and occupational changes on job quality in Europe
- To provide evidence on the impact of the use of automation and AI and the development of new forms of work on working conditions
- To provide evidence on the role of job quality in

maintaining and further developing high-quality public services

- To provide evidence on trends in job quality in different regions and the convergence of working conditions across the EU

Expected results

Preserving and creating new jobs remains a priority for the EU. Renewed emphasis is put on job quality. A quality job is not only a key source of income and purpose for the individual, quality jobs are also essential for creating the kind of inclusive labour markets and societies that the EU is striving for. Good job quality is also associated with higher levels of engagement at work, which, in turn, is linked to innovation and productivity. Through analysing the results of its high-quality, probability-based European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Eurofound will be able to provide comparative data and unique insights into trends in the development of working conditions and job quality across the EU Member States. The analysis is geared towards supporting the development of policies that will address the challenges faced by the Union and its Member States to deliver on the promise of leaving no one behind when it comes to equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. The data will inform policies and measures designed to foster the integration of diverse groups into the labour market by highlighting the particular challenges faced in terms of working conditions and job quality by, for example, women, migrant workers, young people and people with disabilities. The analysis of working conditions in specific sectors, such as the care sector or sectors and occupations particularly affected by the

twin transition, will allow decision-makers, including company-level actors, to take job quality into account when addressing labour shortages and changing skills requirements.

Evidence gathered in this activity on the working conditions of workers in new forms of work could assist policymakers at EU and national levels in understanding the specifics of this issue and offer recommendations for appropriate solutions. The forward-looking approach through foresight exercises on changing preferences and the role of work in people's lives will provide valuable insights for designing policies that take account of what workers want, for example regarding working time regulation, remote work or the right to disconnect, whether it be in the context of legislative changes, collective bargaining or dialogue at company level. Initiatives to regulate the use of AI in the workplace might be taken at EU level during the programming period, and Eurofound research on the impact of technological change, and specifically the use of AI in the workplace, will provide evidence to inform policymaking.

Eurofound's work under this activity will also inform policies that strive to reduce inequalities between and within countries, regions and local areas. To foster overall harmonious development, the Union will have to address the situations of rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions that suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps. Information on disparities as regards working conditions and job quality between regions and how they develop in view of the mega-drivers of change will provide an important part of the full picture that needs to be considered for fostering upward convergence.

Work programme 2025: Working conditions and sustainable work

Overview

In this activity, the focus for 2025 will be on the analysis of data collected in 2024 by the EWCS.

Six projects stemming from the 2024 work programme will be finalised: 'The hybrid workplace in the post-COVID-19 era'; 'Working time in the aftermath of the pandemic'; 'Digital transition, job quality and workplace practices, including workers' involvement in SMEs'; 'Employment and working conditions of the most vulnerable workers: Addressing an ongoing policy challenge'; 'Hybrid work: The challenge to manage'; and 'Working conditions of online platform workers'.

The overview report presenting the analysis of data collected by the EWCS in 2024 will explore the multiple dimensions of job quality and compare the situation in the Member States for different sectors, occupations and age groups and by gender. The relationship between job quality and quality of working life for workers belonging to different sociodemographic groups will be explored. As the 2024 survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews, comparability with previous waves of the EWCS is possible for the wide range of questions that are maintained from earlier survey waves, allowing for trend analysis. New questions added in the 2024 survey will make an even deeper analysis of job quality possible, with more information available not only on the cognitive but also the ethical demands at work, as well as on cyberbullying and loneliness, for example. The issue of where people work and what impact hybrid work arrangements have on job quality can also be explored in more depth, given additional questions included in the questionnaire.

The latter battery of questions will be the starting point for an analysis of telework, which will be done in the context of a broader investigation of remote work. This investigation will, on the one hand, look at the role of remote work in facilitating access to the labour market (part of the Employment and labour markets activity), while also examining the impact on working conditions for different groups of workers (part of the Working conditions and sustainable work activity). Using EWCS 2024 and European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) data, and other potentially relevant data sources such as the European Social Survey (ESS) and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), the question of who has and who does not have access to telework arrangements will also be answered. The enabling factors for and barriers to remote work in general and for certain groups of workers in particular will also be explored. This will shed light on the question of whether telework is contributing to new inequalities or reinforcing or decreasing existing inequalities between different groups of workers in relation to employment opportunities, working conditions and overall job quality. In a second phase (in 2026), the role of policies and regulation and workers' representation (social dialogue) in facilitating the inclusion of workers through telework and promoting better working conditions for all will be investigated through a mapping exercise by the NEC and company case studies.

Eurofound's focus for 2025–2028 on investigating the impact of the mega-drivers on sectoral and occupational change will lead to an in-depth investigation of selected sectors. This includes the analysis of working conditions and job quality in the selected sectors. In 2025, EWCS data will be used to investigate if and how working conditions have changed and how job quality in a sector under investigation differs from cross-sectoral averages and from other sectors. The implications and lessons as regards the development of job quality in related sectors, including supply-chain-linked sectors, will also be examined.

Another focus of the 2025–2028 programming period is the challenges that the compound impact of the mega-drivers pose for public services and social protection. In this context, the issue of working conditions and job quality in care services arises. Starting in 2025, working conditions in childcare, healthcare and long-term care will be investigated using data from the EWCS, as well as the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES) (for information on pay). What is the job quality of workers in these subsectors, how has it developed, and how are these linked to the working life outcomes experienced by care workers? As far as possible, a distinction between the public and private sectors will be made. This analysis will feed into a wider project on the care sector that will investigate the link between job quality in care and the quality of services provided.

In 2025, Eurofound's work under this activity will kick off with a project on AI and AI-enabling technologies, investigating the implications for work organisation, employment and working conditions. Among the research questions to be investigated are the prevalence of digital tools in European workplaces for work management (including employee performance monitoring), the extent to which such practices are associated with automated decision-making and the implications for working conditions and work organisation, including the impact on task definition and content and skills. In this first year of implementation, the concept and research approach will be defined for investigating and mapping the implications of AI and new managerial technologies in the workplace. A literature review will be conducted in 2025, as well as a first screening of work management technologies to feed into the conceptual framework. The work of other agencies on the topic will be considered.

Further digitalisation will also impact on new forms of work. Working conditions in these forms of work will be investigated as part of the project 'New forms of work: Labour market trends and working conditions', which is included under the Employment and labour markets activity.

Projects and outputs

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
New		
EWCS 2024 – Overview report	Publication	2025
*Telework – Impact on labour market access and working conditions (investigation of working conditions and job quality)	Publication	2027
*Sectors in focus in the twin transition: Eurofound study of a selected sector (ICT) (investigation of working conditions and job quality)	Publication	2026
*Caring for care services (investigation of working conditions in care services)	Publication	2026
AI (and AI-enabling) technologies for work management: Implications for work organisation, employment, working conditions and social dialogue – development of a concept and research approach	Publication	2025
*New forms of work: Labour market trends and working conditions (investigation of working conditions)	Publication	2026

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
Continued		
The hybrid workplace in the post-COVID-19 era	Publication	2025
Working time in the aftermath of the pandemic	Publication	2026
Digital transition, job quality and workplace practices, including workers' involvement in SMEs	Publication	2025
Employment and working conditions of the most vulnerable workers: Addressing an ongoing policy challenge	Publication	2026
Hybrid work: A new management challenge	Publication	2026
Working conditions of online platform workers	Publication Dataset	2025

Note: * indicates projects shared with other activities; the italicised text in parentheses indicates the aspects of the project carried out under the current activity.

Resources

€41,000 and 7.3 (full-time equivalent) FTE

Activity 2: Industrial relations and social dialogue

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Over the course of the multiannual work programme, this activity will continue to monitor, report and further analyse developments in industrial relations and social dialogue at transnational, national, sector and, as far as feasible, company levels. In addition to the regular monitoring – which looks into the actors, processes and outcomes – it will investigate in more depth over the course of the four years how social dialogue is evolving and what leeway policymakers have to promote collective bargaining. It will also complement the work of other activities in Eurofound by adding the social partners' and the social dialogue perspectives.

Objectives

- To function as a centre of expertise for monitoring and analysing developments in industrial relations and social dialogue at European and national levels, with a view to providing evidence and informing and promoting dialogue between management and labour
- To provide comparative data on national institutional settings and developments in, processes of and outcomes of industrial relations
- To provide information on the social partners landscape in the EU Member States to inform European social dialogue
- To monitor national policy developments and how the social partners are involved in their design and implementation, in particular via EU PolicyWatch
- To deepen Eurofound's expertise in the areas of minimum wages and working time

- To monitor and analyse how collective bargaining develops and can be promoted
- To develop a new format to monitor the development of social dialogue at different levels and how it contributes to shaping, and is itself influenced by, the transitions that economies, work and society are experiencing
- To complement other research in Eurofound with the social dialogue angle

Expected results

The research and monitoring carried out in this activity will be relevant for a range of EU initiatives, such as the Council Recommendation and the Communication on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union; the implementation of the Directive on adequate minimum wages (in particular regarding the involvement of the social partners in setting the minimum wage, the regular updating of minimum wages and the aim to promote collective bargaining coverage); the future of the European Works Councils; the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed; the involvement of the social partners in the European Semester and the recovery and resilience plans; and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

The representativeness studies provide the relevant information needed to guide the setting up of the sectoral social dialogue committees, the consultation of the social partners, and the assessment of the EU social partners' representativeness, which is required to effectively implement social partners' agreements, consult representative social partners and enable them to take part in EU-level social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral levels. In addition to the EU level, the EU-wide comparative information on national

institutional settings and developments in social dialogue and collective bargaining and their outcomes will be a relevant and unique source of information for national policymakers including the social partners. This information will be used in national policy-making, while respecting national laws and/or practices, and bipartite and tripartite social dialogue through sharing good examples from other Member States and will have

helped to promote a better understanding of the communalities and differences in the regulation of working life and the role and involvement of the social partners. Developing the capacity for social dialogue among the social partners at national level will directly benefit from contributions under this activity, notably through the biannual tripartite exchange seminars.

Work programme 2025: Industrial relations and social dialogue

Overview

This activity includes a substantial proportion of regular reports and tools to monitor developments in industrial relations and social dialogue. In 2025, Eurofound will continue to provide sectoral representativeness studies, which will be based on an adapted methodology to be agreed with the Commission and the social partners as a follow-up to the dedicated action included in the Communication on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union.

The regular report on the degree and form of the social partners' involvement in national tripartite policymaking in the context of the European Semester will continue to be prepared. Following initial experiences with a newly piloted methodology in 2024, which explored a stronger direct input from the social partners using both online tools and qualitative research methods (such as focus groups and dedicated workshops with selected countries), triangulated with information from governments, the methodology and reporting will be developed further. A closer integration with the NEC's annual reporting on developments in working life – the country reports – will be investigated during 2025, with potential implications for the publication in 2027.

The EU PolicyWatch database – which, along with examples of collective agreements, company cases and other initiatives, captures how national governments involve the social partners in policymaking – will be updated, as will the European Industrial Relations Dictionary. The regular reporting on minimum wages will provide insights into how Member States have adapted their systems following the transposition of the Directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union. It will also provide evidence on the latest developments regarding minimum wages and how they are set in the Member States and Norway. More analytical work on minimum wages is envisaged as part of the Employment and labour markets activity under the research strand on labour market dynamics and will complement the annual review. Working time developments, including regulation and outcomes, will be monitored via the country reports. Up to three topical updates, which are comparative short reports or contributions to other research, are foreseen during 2025. These publications have a quick turnaround, providing a flexible tool to address emerging policy questions. The topics for these updates – which could also feed into other activities – are decided closer to implementation.

In 2025, the preparation for the 2026 edition of the Tripartite Exchange Seminar, in cooperation with relevant partners, will start. Core issues on the EU policy agenda (such as social dialogue in the digital and green transitions, the transformation of jobs, and upskilling and reskilling) will be examined, focusing on strengthening mutual learning and sharing experiences among national social partners.

Two new research projects will be launched in 2025. The first will provide a comparative overview of the social partners' involvement in the governance of national public employment services and social security institutions in the EU. It will map if, how and why the governance structures of these institutions have changed over the past decade, and how the social partners' role has evolved in relation to governments' role. Based on interviews with the management of the institutions, governments and social partners, it also aims to assess how the current involvement is perceived, to understand its strengths, weaknesses and challenges. Cooperation and exchanges with ELA will be sought.

The other new project aims to provide evidence and examples of how increased or high and stable bargaining coverage rates can be achieved, the obstacles that could be removed, and the range of topics that are addressed in collective agreements (or not). This will be done by gathering evidence on past experiences with regard to devising and implementing policies to promote collective bargaining, with a view to analysing what works in different contexts. The scope will include legislative support measures (or changes to the legislative bargaining framework), programmes and activities funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the ESF and social partners' own initiatives. To what extent have such policies, programmes or initiatives achieved their aims to promote collective bargaining, and under which circumstances were such outcomes achieved (or not) and why? The research will draw on existing evaluation studies and research investigating the impact of such policies, complemented by in-depth case studies of selected policy initiatives. A second part of this research project (to be continued into 2026) will investigate the determinants of

collective bargaining coverage: What factors are empirically observed to contribute most to achieving high and stable collective bargaining coverage? Based on the results of this analysis, the following questions will be addressed: What is the degree of influence that policymakers can have on each of the factors, and which of the factors are therefore the most promising if one aims to keep bargaining coverage stable or increase it? The results of this project can inform actions stemming from the implementation of the Directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union as well as the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union.

In 2025, this activity will also contribute to the project ‘Caring for care services’ (childcare, healthcare and long-term care), which is carried out under the research strand on public services and benefits of the Living conditions and quality of life activity, focusing on representation, collective bargaining and social dialogue in the sector.

Projects and outputs

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
New		
Social partners’ involvement in the governance of national public employment services and social security institutions	Publication	2026
How can collective bargaining be promoted? Lessons learned from the past and the determinants of collective bargaining coverage	Publication	2027
*Caring for care services (<i>childcare, healthcare and long-term care: industrial relations aspects</i>)	Publication	2026
Continued		
Representativeness studies	Publication	2026
Monitoring policy developments and social partner involvement – EU PolicyWatch database	Database update	2025 2026
Topical updates	Publication	2025 2026
European Industrial Relations Dictionary update	Publication	2025 2026
National reporting on industrial relations, social dialogue and working life 2024	Publication	2025
Working life country profiles update 2024–2025	Publication	2025
National tripartite social dialogue and policy formation in the context of the European Semester [Previously: National tripartite social dialogue and policy formation]	Publication	2025 2026
Preparation of Tripartite Exchange Seminar 2026	Publication	2026
The interaction of minimum wages with collective bargaining for low-paid groups	Publication	2025
Further experiences with pay transparency measures	Publication	2025
Minimum wages – Annual review 2025	Publication	2025
Developments in working time (2023–2024)	Publication Dataset	2025
Collective bargaining beyond pay	Publication Dataset	2025

Note: * indicates projects shared with other activities; the italicised text in parentheses indicates the aspects of the project carried out under the current activity

Resources

€1,358,000 and 7.4 FTE

Activity 3: Employment and labour markets

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Large-scale developments are shaping both the extent and modes of employment in Europe. The policy-driven green transition, advancing technological change and a global reconfiguration of supply chains could lead to impacts on the sectoral as well as the occupational structure and the tasks required. Eurofound will investigate labour market dynamics, company practices, restructuring and social partner involvement in addressing these changes to provide evidence to inform the understanding of the EU's competitiveness and to reinforce socioeconomic resilience.

Objectives

- To continue working on the strategic objective of collecting relevant evidence concerning labour market trends in the EU and its Member States by means of the European Jobs Monitor (EJM), the European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) and the platform economy repository
- To examine developments and drivers of labour demand and supply, including factors that enhance the labour market prospects of various groups in the labour market
- To monitor trends in the key new forms of work in terms of their prevalence, potential and implications for different groups in the labour force
- To provide evidence on sectoral and occupational change, including changes in task requirements, and to assess the risks and potential in the ecosystems (sectors or clusters of sectors) of the economy most affected by the mega-drivers as well as twin-transition-related policies

Expected results

Labour market policies and industrial policy initiatives will be informed by evidence on structural change in the

labour market, including knowledge on the potential upgrading or polarisation of jobs (analysed by sector and occupation), on how task requirements in jobs are changing, and on whether shifts in the employment structure are accelerating or slowing.

The research strand focused on sectors will help with understanding the impact of the progress to meet the EU's carbon-neutrality objectives, the adaptation to new technologies and the possible changes that will occur as a result of the changes to global value chains. The analysis is relevant to EU-level initiatives that focus on specific sectors and their workforces, especially in light of the shrinking EU working-age population and the potential changes to working time and place of work. The analysis will also provide evidence on how companies adapt and restructure and thereby will contribute to the understanding of how to put in place responsible restructuring practices in line with the body of existing EU legislation.

Investigating new forms of work, including digitally enabled work such as platform work and ICT-based mobile work, will help in assessing their prevalence over time, and how the opportunities or risks they create affect the employment and labour market prospects of the people involved. Gathering evidence on the impact of this on employment and the workforce – especially as automation is amplifying the shift towards more knowledge-intensive activities, including in education, information and communications technology (ICT), and human health and social work – can inform the development of initiatives that may seek to create optimal conditions for ensuring technology serves the people and the economy.

The assessment of evidence on the impact of minimum wages on employment will contribute to monitoring the developments in this field and provide insights on the impact of the Directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union. The EU's initiatives in the area of gender equality, such as the Directive on Pay Transparency, will be informed by research on the determinants of gender differences in wages.

Work programme 2025: Employment and labour markets

Overview

Eurofound will continue the updates of its key tools for monitoring structural change in the labour market: the EJM and ERM, including the overview of legal instruments. Applying the EJM approach to labour market statistics helps with assessing past trends and recent patterns with regard, for example, to upgrading or polarisation in the labour market. The monitoring of restructuring in the EU delivers information on emerging changes in the economy, acting as a lead indicator. The web-based platform economy repository will be updated to provide easy access to specific information concerning developments in and regulation of employment in this type of economic activity.

In 2025, the work on assessing the gender pay gap and the link to the educational gender gap will be completed. The project comparing jobs in terms of their task requirements will bring the evidence together in a report highlighting the implications for job mobility and employment reallocation in the labour market. A report on company adaptation and restructuring practices in relation to the twin transition and changing work arrangements will be released.

Five new projects will start in 2025.

‘Sectors in focus in the twin transition’ will look at sectors where the mega-drivers are expected to create large-scale changes or where significant policy responses to the mega-drivers will affect the European economy and society. The first study on a selected sector (ICT) will be carried out in 2025. The research questions concern changes in employment, occupational structure, working conditions, the role of social dialogue and the implications for other sectors (including supply-chain-linked sectors). The methodology is based on quantitative analysis of labour market statistics (available via the EJM and complemented with a more detailed sectoral, occupational and regional focus) and the EWCS (as mentioned in the Working conditions and sustainable work activity) and uses ERM case information and background research from representativeness studies where relevant.

An analysis of the employment shifts in the care sectors will contribute to the project ‘Caring for care services’ in the Living conditions and quality of life activity.

‘New forms of work: Labour market trends and working conditions’ seeks to provide evidence on the employment arrangements and forms of work that are emerging in the context of the ongoing transformation of the European labour market. This project will provide an overview of a range of specific working arrangements – some new, some less recent – that apply to a substantial share of employment in the EU, such as very short-term temporary contracts; very low hours part-time work; different types of zero-hours or casual contracts; platform work; dependent forms of self-employment; ICT-based mobile work; and other new forms of work that are identified. The analysis will address changes in terms of share of employment, key features of the working conditions, the link to voluntary and involuntary part-time work, and labour market transitions. Regarding the transitions, the research will explore the limitations and potential of selected new forms of working arrangements in terms of access to the labour market and transitions between jobs and contract types. Attention will also be paid to how digital technologies affect new forms of work (such as ICT-enabled remote work and potential changes resulting from developments in the platform economy and AI applications). The research will involve a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis and use of the EU-LFS (including longitudinal data) and EWCS.

‘Labour market dynamics: Impact of minimum wage policies on low-paid jobs’ aims to explore the impacts of minimum wages from a comparative perspective. It will provide an analytical complement to Eurofound’s ongoing monitoring of minimum wage developments in Europe (see the Industrial relations and social dialogue activity) by analysing the impact of increasing minimum wages (both nominal and real) on labour demand in low-paid jobs, as well as other labour market outcomes that can be associated with minimum wage increases. It will primarily focus on quantitative analysis of existing wage and employment data sources (EU-LFS, EU-SILC and SES) and Eurofound’s database of minimum wage developments.

For the project ‘Telework – Impact on labour market access and working conditions’, the research (in addition to research in the Working conditions and sustainable work activity) will focus on identifying and assessing the enabling factors for and barriers to remote work in general and for certain groups of workers in particular, as well as groups beyond labour market (including from the perspectives of gender, age, disability and health status). In 2025, existing evidence from relevant Eurofound and other surveys and literature will be reviewed to prepare for policy mapping and case studies on improving access to the labour market through remote work (to be continued in 2026).

Projects and outputs

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
New		
*Sectors in focus in the twin transition: Eurofound study of a selected sector (ICT) (<i>investigation of employment and occupational structure</i>)	Publication	2026
*New forms of work: Labour market trends and working conditions (<i>investigation of labour market trends</i>)	Publication	2026
Labour market dynamics: Impact of minimum wage policies on low-paid jobs	Publication	2026
*Telework – Impact on labour market access and working conditions (<i>investigation of employment of specific groups</i>)	Publication	2027
*Caring for care services (employment shifts in care services)	Publication	2026
Continued		
European Jobs Monitor (EJM) – Annual update on structural change in the labour market	Publication	2025
European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) – An update	Database update Publication	2025 2025

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
Continued		
European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) – Legal update	Database update	2025
Platform economy repository – An update	Database update	2025
Wage determinants in the EU: The riddle of opposing gender gaps	Publication	2025
Measuring job differences in task requirements: Implications for mobility and employment reallocation across the economy	Publication	2025
Company restructuring practices related to the twin transition	Publication	2025

Note: * indicates projects shared with other activities; the italicised text in parentheses indicates the aspects of the project carried out under the current activity.

Resources
€475,000 and 6.1 FTE

Activity 4: Living conditions and quality of life

Multiannual perspective

Overview

In the programming period, Eurofound will continue monitoring living conditions, cohesion and convergence in Europe. The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), to be fielded in 2026, will be a unique tool to assess the impact of the four mega-drivers and the compounded challenges on quality of life and material living conditions in Europe. The activity will focus on different groups, such as young people, women, people with a disability and migrants, examining their needs and access to public services and social protection. The activity will also investigate the social implications of the transition to a climate-neutral economy, focusing on sustainable behaviours, distributional effects and social cohesion. Additionally, the social impact of technological change and AI will be investigated, including the digital divide and the living conditions of those working in new forms of work. Furthermore, Eurofound will continue monitoring economic and social inequalities among both sociodemographic groups and geographical entities. In this regard, new research on regional convergence will be regularly carried out, expanding the work done in the previous programming period.

Objectives

- To provide new findings on living conditions through the analysis of the high-quality data collected by the EQLS in 2026
- To provide evidence on the dynamics and drivers of living conditions for various sociodemographic groups, including young people, men and women, older people, people with disabilities, and migrants and the access of these groups to public services and social benefits

- To provide evidence on the dynamics of and trends in inequalities among various sociodemographic groups in Europe and to analyse the uneven impact of the cost of living and housing
- To provide evidence on the impact of the transition to a climate-neutral economy on the living conditions of European citizens and its implications for energy and transport poverty
- To provide evidence on the broader impact of the digital transformation and AI on the living conditions in and social cohesion of European societies
- To provide evidence on the role of quality of public services and social protection systems in addressing in-work poverty and fostering the inclusion of vulnerable groups in European societies, including reducing poverty and strengthening social cohesion
- To provide evidence on the trends in and drivers of geographical disparities and territorial inequalities at Member State and regional levels, with special emphasis on convergence in the economic, social, institutional and environmental dimensions

Expected results

The various strands of work in this activity, including the research on the impact of the cost of living, housing, public services, vulnerable groups and the European Child Guarantee, will support the work of EU policymakers in monitoring and implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The EU agenda on promoting inclusive and accessible social services for citizens will be supported by research on public services, with a focus on care services. This work will feed particularly into the EU's objective of ensuring high-quality and sustainable care provision throughout the EU as per the European Care Strategy and the Communication on a comprehensive approach

to mental health. Furthermore, the work of Member States to implement the European Child Guarantee, underscoring the EU's commitment to improving the lives of children and families across Europe as per the proposed recommendation of June 2021, will be supported by Eurofound's work in this policy area. Moreover, the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disability 2021–2030 could also benefit from the Eurofound's work on the social and employment inclusion of people with disabilities.

Work undertaken by Eurofound in the area of social protection, including social benefits and non-take-up of services, could inform the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion and the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.

The European Green Deal, which is driving the transition of the EU towards climate neutrality, could be informed by Eurofound's investigation of the social impact of the green transition, its impact on energy poverty and social cohesion, and the citizen consensus around it. Furthermore, the European AI Strategy will be supported by the work on the impact of AI on European societies and related living conditions, while the EU digital agenda will be informed by Eurofound's work on e-healthcare and the living conditions of platform and ICT-based mobile workers.

The EU's cohesion policy and its goals of promoting regional development and convergence could be informed by Eurofound research on territorial disparities and the geographical convergence of the EU, whose objectives align with the European Pillar of Social Rights and its aim of acting as a compass for upward convergence in the EU.

Work programme 2025: Living conditions and quality of life

Overview

In 2025, Eurofound will complete its analysis of policy actions undertaken to prevent and address mental health problems in Europe and the study investigating the implementation of the European Child Guarantee, with a special emphasis on the workforce. Furthermore, the research on the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on wealth inequality will be concluded, and the work on social cohesion and new forms of participation will be completed. Finally, the work on the monitoring framework to measure the social and economic implications of the transition to a carbon-neutral economy, the project examining informal care and undeclared care work, and the project titled 'Digitalisation in social protection: Trends, risks and opportunities' will be finalised.

Eurofound will continue to provide its annual update on convergence and living conditions in Europe, placing a special focus on emerging trends and new challenges that Europe is facing.

Eurofound will initiate new research to investigate public services during 2025–2028. In this regard, in 2025, special attention will be given to care services, including childcare, healthcare and long-term care. Given the interlinkages between these care sectors (providing care at different stages in people's life cycle), to enable comparisons and to ensure consistency, these sectors will be investigated jointly. This transversal project will identify developments over time in access to care services, working conditions, collective agreements and employment (see the other activities). Developments in shifting care models will be mapped through a NEC questionnaire. In line with the European Care Strategy, special focus will be placed on access to and usage of e-healthcare consultations and on developments in person-centeredness in long-term care, as well as the role of domestic, home and community care and platform workers in childcare and long-term care.

Furthermore, and following a similar approach, research will be carried out over 2025–2028 in the field of social protection. In 2025, special focus will be placed on children and the European Child Guarantee. Eurofound will produce an overview of the implementation of the European Child Guarantee in Europe, reviewing the intervention of Member States in various policy domains and demonstrating the diversity of approaches and actions taken by Member States. Additionally, further analysis of indicators in the EU-wide convergence-monitoring framework and data related to the policy domains of the European Child Guarantee and the European Education Area will be performed, and the data visualisation tool developed by Eurofound in 2023 will be updated. This project will build on previous work carried out by Eurofound on the European Child Guarantee.

The European Green Deal and the need to adapt to climate change will present both opportunities and challenges to living and working conditions in Europe. During 2025–2028, Eurofound will initiate new research on the social implications of transitioning to a climate-neutral economy. In 2025, a new project will monitor the possible social impact of the green transition on the cost of living, housing and transport. The impact may affect citizens' support for the green transition as well as their adoption of sustainable behaviours, including the use of renewable energy and electrified forms of transport. Through the NEC, the project will investigate the impact of government policies and regulations aimed at supporting citizens in the transition to a climate-neutral economy. Furthermore, an investigation

of the level of support from citizens for the green transition and its implications for social cohesion will be performed using quantitative data collected through the Living and Working in the EU e-survey. The results of this study could inform the development of policies to smooth the social impact of the green transition and to support citizens in the adoption of sustainable behaviours. Eurofound will consult with the European Commission in view of the work the Commission is doing on monitoring the Council Recommendation on the fair transition, to maximise synergies.

Finally, during 2025–2028, Eurofound will launch new research to investigate the development of geographical disparities and convergence. In 2025, using the statistical methodology previously developed to monitor upward convergence, a new project will focus on the trends in and dynamics of disparities between Member States and regions across economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions. The aim is to map the performance of European regions across time along the four dimensions and to investigate the factors driving these trends. Additionally, it will explore how divergence and low performance affect social capital and institutional trust in different geographical areas of the EU.

Projects and outputs

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
New		
Social implications of just transition: Behavioural aspects and support	Publication	2026
*Caring for care services (<i>access to services and e-healthcare</i>)	Publication	2026
Social protection: The Child Guarantee	Publication	2026
Monitoring geographical disparities: Regional convergence	Publication	2026
State of play of convergence 2025	Publication	2025
State of play of living conditions 2025	Publication	2025
Continued		
Care provision and the role of informal carers	Publication	2025
Social cohesion and new forms of inclusive participation	Publication	2025
Digitalisation in social protection: Trends, risks and opportunities	Publication	2025
Addressing challenges to mental health in Europe: Trends and services	Publication	2025
European Child Guarantee: Two years on	Publication	2025
The dynamics of wealth inequality in Europe	Publication	2025
Further evidence on the socioeconomic impact of the transition to a carbon-neutral economy, monitoring the employment and social dimensions of the green transition	Publication	2025

Note: * indicates projects shared with other activities; the italicised text in parentheses indicates the aspects of the project carried out under the current activity.

Resources

€369,000 and 7.4 FTE

Activity 5: Survey management and development

Multiannual perspective

Overview

A new edition of the EQLS will be fielded during the programming period, and preparations for the fielding of the ECS will take place. The e-survey will be fielded annually, capturing data on emerging issues. Acting on the lessons learned from the EWCS 2024, Eurofound will continue developing a long-term survey strategy that ensures the collection of high-quality comparable data.

This includes the evaluation of the online fielding of the EWCS 2024 and the associated test elements as well as the finalisation of a vision on how the surveys are to be organised in terms of in-house survey management, procurement and contracting. Exploration of alternative and complementary data sources will continue, with a focus on improving methodologies.

Objectives

The overall objective of this activity is to ensure that Eurofound continues to provide high-quality comparable survey data on living and working conditions, social dialogue, and workplace practices in

European companies. To achieve this objective, the work in this activity is divided into three strands:

- collecting high-quality comparable survey data: preparing and fielding the surveys
- making the surveys future-proof: methodological survey development
- improving the organisation of the surveys: survey administration

As part of the first strand, Eurofound will collect data on living conditions through a new edition of the EQLS. It will also prepare for the collection of data on workplace practices and social dialogue at establishment level through a new edition of the ECS, which is planned to go into the field in 2028–2029. For the ECS, this will require exploration of a suitable substantive focus allowing for the integration of the interests of potential partners. The EWCS 2024 collected comparable data on working conditions, and in 2025 the online data collection will be complemented by follow-up interviews to collect further information from respondents who received the short versions of the online questionnaire. Eurofound will also field the e-survey annually, which allows Eurofound to provide stakeholders with timely findings on upcoming issues.

As part of the second strand, Eurofound will continue its methodological work that informs the development of a long-term strategy for the surveys and includes exploring alternative data sources, for instance, using administrative data or big data. It will examine the

lessons learned from fielding the EWCS 2024 online and the associated tests, with a view to future-proof the random-probability surveys. The Agency will also continue to work on developing cost-effective alternative data-collection methods, including options for improving the methodology for fielding and analysing non-probability online surveys.

As part of the third strand, Eurofound will use the lessons learned from the procurement of the EWCS 2024 and the outcome of its evaluation to further examine alternative ways in which survey management can be organised, assessing which elements are best contracted out and which are better carried out in-house.

Expected results

The data collected through the surveys will serve as the basis of the research carried out in the other activities that enables policymakers and stakeholders to take evidence-based actions to improve living and working conditions as well as social dialogue and company practices across Europe.

Based on the evaluation of the EWCS 2024 and agreement with the Management Board, Eurofound as a data provider will have adopted a long-term strategy for its probability-based surveys, with a view to collecting high-quality comparable data. In addition to the three probability-based surveys, the use of alternative data sources will be further explored to fill eventual data gaps and ensure that Eurofound benefits from opportunities that alternative sources can provide.

Work programme 2025: Survey management and development

Overview

In 2025, Eurofound will finalise the EWCS 2024 by fielding four rounds of follow-up interviews with EWCS respondents and completing the reporting and documentation of the survey process. The survey will also undergo a thorough evaluation. In addition to the ‘traditional’ quality assessment, there will be an evaluation of the online fielding of the EWCS and the associated test elements to enable Eurofound make an assessment of how to move forward with the survey in terms of data collection. This process will be supported by the Steering Group on the Future of the Surveys. The results will be presented to the Management Board and will serve as a basis for further decisions.

Eurofound will select a contractor for the fieldwork of the EQLS 2026 and finalise and conduct a cognitive test of the questionnaire.

Strategic orientations for the three probability-based surveys will be discussed and decided upon by the Management Board to ensure the quality and representativeness of the data.

Conceptual work for the next edition of the ECS will continue in 2025.

The yearly edition of the e-survey will be fielded in the 27 EU Member States. Eurofound will continue to assess options to improve the methodology for non-probability online e-surveys.

Projects and outputs

Project	Outputs	Year of main deliverable
New		
Evaluation of the online fielding of the EWCS 2024 and the associated test elements	Publication	2025
Yearly edition of the e-survey	Dataset	2025
Continued		
Finalisation of the EWCS 2024 online follow-up interviews	Dataset Publication	2026
Preparing for the EQLS 2026/2027	Questionnaire Publication	2025
Conceptual work for the next edition of the ECS	Publication	2025
Methodological survey development	Publication	2025

Resources

€1,682,000 and 7.2 FTE

Activity 6: Communication**Multiannual perspective****Overview**

Communication is a core pillar in ensuring Eurofound delivers on its mission to provide timely, relevant and reliable knowledge in support of the elaboration of informed social, employment and work-related policies in the EU. The disruption of the traditional communication context makes this more demanding than ever. Competition for attention at all levels, information overload, the rapid proliferation of channels and tools, and the growth of AI and disinformation all create new challenges for Eurofound as it seeks to provide reliable, unbiased and timely information and analysis to the EU institutions and bodies, Member States and social partners.

Drawing on its updated communication strategy, Eurofound will continue to seek to adapt its approach to the new environment, investing continuously in an agile modern digital response, prioritising partnerships that provide clear added value and embedding the policy dimension in all aspects of its work.

In addition to the above, the priorities for Eurofound's communication approach during this programme will be impacted by other changes. The new European Parliament and European Commission will have recently commenced their terms of office, and the new strategic agenda will have been adopted, with the various accompanying adaptations to the policy agenda this implies. An anticipated increase in citizen engagement following the Conference on the Future of Europe and around the EU elections will also imply a new communication context. These changes will shape Eurofound's communication priorities, as well the

requirements to respond on an ongoing basis to the changes associated with the digital and green transitions.

The need to engage effectively and in a timely way with stakeholders, target audiences, subscribers and followers will continue to be at the forefront of Eurofound's communication work prioritising user-centric communication, i.e. researching target audiences' needs before drawing upon the latest technologies and trends to ensure seamless user experiences. This will be based on data-driven decisions, making informed content-creation decisions based on user research and analysis of digital communication metrics, and adapting priorities, channels, tools and outputs continuously, based on the information gathered through user feedback, evaluations and analytics.

Objectives

Three key objectives will provide the framework for communication during this programming period.

1. Ensure continued implementation of the digital-first approach to content production and dissemination
 - a. This work will build on the upgraded corporate website and dedicated web applications environment, driven by improved data management processes and an increased capacity for data visualisation development and digital storytelling.
 - b. It will further expand Eurofound's digital debate and interactive communication offerings through the EurofoundTalks podcast and #EurofoundLive webinar series as well as the virtual visits programme.

- c. It will intensify efforts in the area of social media and segmented electronic dissemination as well as new digital formats to reach stakeholders in a timely and accessible manner.
- 2. Continue to explore options for partnerships that bring added value in terms of reach and resources
 - a. This work will build on the wide-ranging collaborations with EU institutions, agencies and international organisations that grew during the previous programme.
- 3. Consolidate the policy relevance in all communication outputs and activities
 - a. This work will build further on the developments in this area in the previous programme such as the Brussels Briefings, the Eurofound blogs series, and the #AskTheExpert and #EurofoundLive webinar series.
 - b. Some examples of topics in focus during this programming period include the twin transition, demographic change, reducing inequalities, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Expected results

How effectively Eurofound communicates its work is critical to the Agency achieving its overall mission to provide timely, relevant and reliable knowledge in support of the elaboration of informed social, employment and work-related policies in the EU, based on sound analysis and with the participation of the social partners.

Specifically, the Communication activity contributes directly to the strategic objective to maintain high-quality interactive communication with stakeholders using up-to-date communication formats, tools and techniques. Through its work on the data warehouse and in terms of data collection for the e-survey, it also contributes actively to the objective to ensure a sustainable and up-to-date mechanism for data collection, management, use and reuse. The communication efforts to build positive partnerships that bring clear added value to the work of Eurofound also feed in directly to the objective to further build on the unique knowledge and expertise of Eurofound, while being open to cooperation with other partners.

Overall, the aim of the communication approach is to optimise the quality and timeliness of the impact of Eurofound's work for decision-makers as they shape better-informed policies to improve living and working for all Europeans.

Work programme 2025: Communication

Overview

The annual communication programme for 2025 will continue to ensure high-quality, timely publication and promotion of Eurofound's work across various channels; boost optimal functioning of the corporate website and content development; manage a wide-ranging programme of events and outreach initiatives; and drive forward several innovative and user-driven communication activities. The #EurofoundTalks podcast series will be expanded to engage further with our stakeholders, and the #AsktheExpert online webinar series will continue to present the policy focus of Eurofound's research. The Brussels Briefings will build on the success of this new format, working to deliver targeted, timely and relevant information to EU stakeholders, while the virtual visits programme will continue to build links with stakeholders at national level. The updated brand identity will be implemented to coincide with the launch of the new multiannual work programme, and the new digital translation tools will allow Eurofound to increase its impact at national level.

Eurofound's 50th anniversary will be an important communication opportunity to promote the Agency's work. In and around 26 May 2025 – the anniversary of the day Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75 established the Agency 50 years ago – Eurofound will mark five decades of active contribution to improving the quality of life and working conditions of all Europeans. Eurofound will host its quadrennial Foundation Forum in 2025 during the celebration of Eurofound's 50-year anniversary and, as always, in partnership with the Irish government. The Foundation Forum will build on Eurofound's 'Living and working in Europe' annual lecture series, which commenced in 2023, and the lessons learned from the previous hybrid Forum, which took place in 2022. A focus will continue to be placed on stakeholder engagement and supporting the EU institutions, social partners and the EU Presidencies, specifically Poland and Denmark, as well as collaborating with the Irish Presidency scheduled for 2026. Responding to ongoing user feedback and evaluation, Eurofound will drive forward its work on user-centric communication, researching target audiences' needs before drawing upon the latest technologies and trends to optimise user experiences, prioritising the digital-first approach. Eurofound will also continue its targeted information and communication campaign addressing the new European Parliament members and Commission College in place since 2024 to raise awareness of Eurofound's work, its credibility and services. New media and other partners will be developed, allowing Eurofound to leverage the benefits of collaboration to ensure cost efficiencies and wider reach.

Project	Year of main deliverable
Corporate production and publication (translation, typesetting and printing, editing, library, web hosting and application development, web content development)	2025
Corporate campaigns (media, stakeholder engagement, events, dissemination)	2027

Resources
€1,185,000 and 18.7 FTE

7. Human and financial resources outlook: Resource programming 2025–2028

Financial resources

Eurofound's subsidy over the programming years is based on the multiannual financial framework of the EU, including an annual inflation compensation of €453,000 granted from 2023 on, as well as a further increase of €380,000 for the same reason from 2025 on. It also includes an annual amount of €650,000 for the partial mitigation of the high level of the Irish country coefficient applied to salaries and related expenditure (Title 1). Furthermore, it is planned to increase other revenue by almost €100,000 from 2025 on by recouping administrative costs in the context of service and contribution agreements. Title 1 expenditure is assumed to increase by about 2% annually from 2026 on. For 2025, however, the development in this title over recent years required a structural increase (due to salary adjustments and the persistent high level of the

Irish country coefficient); therefore, an additional amount of €1 million had to be allocated to Title 1 in 2025 as compared with 2024.

Similarly, the building and infrastructure cost (Title 2) are planned to rise by less than 2% per year with the exception of 2025, for which an additional €100,000 has been assigned to the information technology (IT) area, which showed a structural deficit in previous years. This was due to the ever-increasing fees for IT licences (also for the use of systems provided by the Commission, such as ABAC and Sysper) and additional efforts in the area of cybersecurity. In both titles, further inflationary pressure could create a budgetary risk difficult to balance within the same title. While the operational budget (Title 3) is planned to slightly increase from 2026 on, a decreased amount is required in 2025 to cover the necessary additional budget in Titles 1 and 2. The operational budget will remain very significantly below the Title 3 levels seen at the beginning of the previous decade (around €7.5 to €9 million between 2010 and 2015).

Table 2: Summary of revenue and expenditure for 2023 and 2024 and forecasts for 2025–2027

<i>in thousand €</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
	PD 2023	PD 2024	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Revenue					
<i>Subsidy</i>	23,595	24,054	24,902	25,380	25,867
<i>Other revenue</i>	218	206	298	300	313
Total	23,813	24,260	25,200	25,680	26,180
Expenditure					
<i>Title 1</i>	16,053	16,360	17,360	17,700	18,040
<i>Title 2</i>	1,660	1,720	1,840	1,870	1,900
<i>Title 3</i>	6,100	6,180	6,000	6,110	6,240
Total	23,813	24,260	25,200	25,680	26,180

Details of the evolution of revenue and expenditure can be found in Annex III.

Human resources

Table 3 sets out the projected staff evolution up to 2027.

Table 3: Projected evolution of staff population 2023–2027

Categories	Staff population planned for 2023	Staff population planned for 2024	Staff population planned for 2025	Staff population planned for 2026	Staff population planned for 2027
Total AD ⁴	51	51	51	51	51
Total AST ⁵	40	40	40	40	40
Total CA ⁶	13	13	13	13	13
SNE ⁷	1	1	1	1	1
Structural service providers ⁸	7	7	7	7	7
Total	112	112	112	112	112

Eurofound does not expect changes in overall staffing in the period 2023–2027. Details of the staff population and evolution are included in Annex IV.

The stable headcount is a reflection of the budgetary constraints and an unchanged mandate in the Founding Regulation, which requires at least staffing at the levels outlined above.

Development of tasks and efficiency gains

Eurofound did not experience a change in its mandate in many years. Additional resources were therefore not allocated to the Agency beyond the partial compensation for extraordinary cost increases in the area of salaries and salary-related expenditure (due to inflation and an increase in the Irish country coefficient). However, it should be acknowledged that some tasks do grow in scope and complexity over time (see chapter I.3).

A good example is the new Cybersecurity Regulation, which entered into force in 2024 and foresees the mandatory implementation of a set of cybersecurity measures by all EU institutions, bodies and agencies within 24 months of its adoption, as well as their regular review. The new regulation significantly increases the compliance requirements imposed on the Agency and has a substantial impact on the resources to be allocated to this growing task.

In order to ensure compliance with the Regulation (EU) 2023/2841, Eurofound has established a detailed action plan, encompassing the existing best practices in the cybersecurity field, in order to identify the security risks, implement mitigation measures, increase its ability to detect and manage cybersecurity events, as well as to recover from cybersecurity incidents.

Considering the substantial human and financial resources required by the regulation, the implementation of the plan will potentially divert limited capacities from otherwise important business areas. It is also possible that some principles, for example zero trust, will only be implemented to a level satisfying the regulation.

Eurofound has for some time been investigating different shared solutions with other agencies, as well as wider and deeper cooperation with CERT-EU (the EU interinstitutional cybersecurity entity), which, to date, has not yet been able to commit to provide the required service level to agencies. Eurofound would welcome finding an arrangement with the other DG EMPL agencies to jointly deal with the new tasks in a cost-effective manner.

4 Administrators (ADs) are officials and temporary agents.

5 Assistants (ASTs) are officials and temporary agents.

6 Contract agents, in FTE.

7 Seconded national expert (SNEs).

8 Service providers are contracted by a private company and carry out specialised outsourced tasks of a horizontal/support nature, for instance in the area of IT. At the Commission, the following general criteria should be fulfilled: 1) no individual contract with the Commission; 2) on the Commission premises, usually with a personal computer and desk; 3) administratively followed by the Commission (badge, etc.); and 4) contributing to the value added of the Commission.

The resulting increased pressure on the operational budget will require a systematic assessment of possibilities to increase the organisation’s efficiency.

- To this end, internal processes will be screened for opportunities to simplify and rationalise them (a continuation of the project on business process improvements). For example, the induction process for new staff members and, more generally, the hire-to-rotate process will be reviewed and, where possible, streamlined and digitalised.
- Improvements to supplier management will be sought within the current regulatory framework, for instance by extending the use of calls for expression of interest.
- A full analysis of the need for services using a zero-based budgeting approach will be regularly repeated.
- The sharing of back office-services with other EU agencies and institutions remains high on the list of priorities. However, the overall efficiency across all participating organisations needs to be ensured.
- The planned focus on fewer but more comprehensive projects should also reduce some of the administrative overhead in procurement, contract management and finance.
- Further identification of specific cases to implement AI should help to streamline Eurofound’s business processes and start testing the first practical solutions.

Negative priorities/Decrease of existing tasks

As explained above, it is particularly the financial situation that remains very strained over the planning years. Investment in infrastructure has been put on hold; the transition to the new financial software SUMMA is at risk for cost reasons; and implementing the new Cybersecurity Regulation is a severe challenge in terms of resources required. Regular efficiency exercises already done in the past mean that all costs have been reviewed several times, and the possibilities to reduce further are slim.

Eurofound’s added value resides in its capacity to generate and analyse new data on a host of policy-relevant issues related to working and living conditions, covering the EU27 (and beyond), mostly using probability-based surveys and the NEC. Most of the Title 3 budget is dedicated to data gathering. This data is then applied in the analysis of the projects.

The planned work for the probability-based surveys – EWCS, EQLS and ECS – remains outside the scope of negative priorities, despite the fact that they account for the largest single share of Title 3. This is because the budget assigned to the surveys is already deemed to be on the lower side compared with the level of results expected by stakeholders.

The latest exercise of negative priorities has led to a reprioritisation and reallocation of the budget for 2025.

1. The budget for the ad hoc reserve was initially halved (from approximately €400,000 to €200,000), but following the additional subsidy announced by the Director-General for Budget (DG BUDG) at the end of 2024, the budget for the ad hoc reserve was increased by €380,000.
2. Research activities have been reviewed and are now decreased by €200,000, including a review of the structural data collection for the EurWORK database, legal instruments database, etc.
 - a. Budgets allocated for survey methodology development (beyond running the already established surveys) have been cut, putting a restriction on Eurofound’s capacity to test various survey designs.
 - b. In 2023, the EurWORK database was discontinued following a reassessment and refocusing of data collection.
 - c. A reassessment of data collection for the legal instruments database within the ERM took place, which led to a refocusing of data collection to narrow the focus purely to restructuring.
 - d. Eurofound will continue to reassess its structural data collection, for EU PolicyWatch, the ERM and so on, with a view of streamlining it and making it more efficient.

Projects have been reassessed with regards to added value and timeliness, and while all projects have been maintained at this stage, it has led to the reduction in budgets for experts and case studies and postponement of some projects.

3. In the Communication activity, a longer-term structural budget reallocation was initiated to save €200,000.
 - a. Full translation by the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT) of relevant corporate documents (procurement, recruitment, governance and so on) and translation of key messages and findings along with core web pages will continue. Other translations will be facilitated by an e-translation module available online for HTML text, which allows for a more agile and comprehensive multilingual approach at lower cost.
 - b. A change of contractor as well as increased in-house editing and a streamlined quality control process has allowed for limited reductions in the annual editing budget. This, of course, assumes a stable volume of edited outputs on an ongoing basis.

- c. Events have been streamlined and increasingly moved online, which has allowed for the reduction of the annual budget allocated to stakeholder engagement. This assumes, of course, some level of adaptation of traditional high-level events such as the Foundation Forum.

Meetings and mission costs have decreased substantially since 2020, and further reductions are being sought for library and subscription costs as well as for the contract for evaluations.

Annexes

Annexes to follow.

Getting in touch with the EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: <http://europa.eu/contact>

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls)
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696
- by email via: <http://europa.eu/contact>

Finding information about the EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: <http://europa.eu>

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from the EU Bookshop at: <http://publications.europa.eu/eubookshop>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see <http://europa.eu/contact>).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.



Publications Office
of the European Union

ISBN 978-92-897-2453-1
doi:10.2806/5227783