



Studies contracted in **2022**

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European Economic
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Energy policy and the labour market: Consequences for employment in regions undergoing energy transitions

This study examines the socio-economic situation of three lignite regions in the process of transitioning out of coal mining: Lusatia in Germany, Wielkopolska in Poland, and Upper Nitra in Slovakia.

It assesses the effectiveness of various instruments, factors and approaches in creating quality jobs, employment, and economic growth.

The research results suggest that a successful energy transition requires the involvement of all stakeholders, the development of tailored strategies, and the addressing of miners' identity issues.

The study provides general recommendations for a just energy transition, such as aligning strategies across scales of government, investing in skills and training, and providing adequate funding.

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Authors: Oskar Chmiel, Tomas Jeck, Agnieszka Kulesa, Izabela Marcinkowska, Waldemar Milewicz
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Requesting service: Group II – Workers' group
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Collecting data on the situation of social protection of seasonal workers in the agriculture and food sectors in EU Member States after COVID-19

The decline of employment in the European agriculture sector increases the need of EU and non-EU seasonal workers at peaks of planting and harvesting activities. EU citizens' freedom and right to work across the Union allows the proper functioning of the market economy by providing labour where and when it is needed.

Still, after 30 years of the single market, once seasonal workers arrive at their destination, they are subject to fragmented, often localised, employment arrangements and rules. Non-EU seasonal workers follow different mobilisation mechanisms, but end up in the same fragmented situations.

In this context, characterisation and quantification of seasonal work in the agriculture and food sectors is a challenge. Due to the lack of sufficient law enforcement capacity at the territorial level by social (e.g., trade unions) and government (e.g., labour inspection units) actors, seasonal workers' rights in terms of social protection and decent working and living conditions can be violated by unethical employers, intermediaries, or even crime organisations.

This study collects evidence on data/information gaps; draws insights from Italy, Spain and the Netherlands; highlights problems and makes suggestions to improve the working and living conditions as well as the protection of seasonal agri-food workers in Europe.

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Authors: Rossella Soldi; Simona Cavallini
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Requesting service: NAT Section
Contact: nat@eesc.europa.eu

Europe's Circular Economy and its Pact for Skills: Working together for an inclusive and job-rich transition?

The transition to circularity is changing business models and skill needs of industry in Europe.

Although the capability to monitor the development of skills and occupations related to circularity is still weak, the European Commission supports industry, education institutions and public authorities in the identification of these skills and in the undertaking of skilling, upskilling and reskilling initiatives of the European workforce.

The aim is not only to maintain jobs, but to equip workers with circular skills for the transition to happen.

Besides the Erasmus+ programme in general and the blueprint projects in particular, the Pact for Skills, where stakeholders are supported to aggregate and create synergies, and other EU instruments are available to facilitate skills development for circularity.

This study highlights some limitations of these instruments and makes suggestions for improvement. It also reviews recent analyses to understand the green or circular skills of the future which have been identified thus far in sectoral analyses and EU-wide research.

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Authors: Rossella Soldi; Simona Cavallini
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Requesting service: INT Section, NAT Section, SOC Section
Contact: int@eesc.europa.eu; nat@eesc.europa.eu; soc@eesc.europa.eu

EU space policy and the involvement of civil society

The study aims at understanding the links between space and the civil society and explaining how the latter is involved and consulted in EU space policy-making.

The report presents the complex governance of European space activities and the different organisations involved in it. It also describes the general impact of the space sector on European economy and analyses specific EU policies in more depth (on green, digital and security) to assess to which extent they integrate the use of space solutions.

The study then identifies the gaps to fill in the EU toolkit and the barriers to overcome to better involve European citizens in EU space policy and its elaboration.

The report concludes with recommendations for the EESC and other EU institutions for their future engagement with civil society on space policy. These recommendations focus on three dimensions: communication (to improve awareness on the benefits provided by space), action (to ensure a greater uptake of EU space solutions) and evaluation (to ensure the effectiveness of engagement activities).

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Authors:	Clémence Poirier; Mathieu Bataille; Lars Petzold
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Requesting service:	TEN Section
Contact:	ten@eesc.europa.eu

Making the EESC the facilitator and guarantor of participatory democracy activities, including structured dialogue with civil society organizations and citizens' panels

This study looks at the Conference of the Future of Europe's (CoFoE) proposals on European democracy and the role of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

It explores different options for institutional reform of the EESC to best serve its purpose and increase citizens' participation.

To do this, the study examines different forms of participatory and deliberative practices, the current functions of the EESC, and the roles and structures of selected National Economic and Social Councils (NESC). The study concludes with recommendations for revisiting the EESC's structure and functioning, and centred around the issues of communication improvement, points at which the general public should be involved, as well as digitalisation.

As regards the structure of the EESC, a more targeted approach to representation and abandoning the tripartite structure is suggested by experts interviewed for the purpose of this study.

The study concludes that new forms of EESC activities should be given the time, resources, and attention they need to be effective.

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Authors: Delia Agostinelli; Jan Bazyli Klakla; Agnieszka Kulesa; Michalina Wacław; Karolina Zubel
Direct link: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/qe-04-23-654-en-n.pdf>
Requesting service: **Group II – Workers' Group**
Contact: gr2@eesc.europa.eu

The cost of climate change on households and families in the EU

This study investigates the major climate-related risks for households in the EU by quantifying the relationship between a set of selected climate-hazards metrics, households' income by source, and sector-specific expenditures, capturing both the climate induced cost of impacts and adaptation measures.

This analysis is complemented with the assessment of mitigation policy costs for households using a mixed modelling approach.

The report highlights the distribution of climate change costs by type (income source- and selected good/service expenditure-related) across regions (NUTS1 level) and socioeconomic characteristics of households (poor, medium income and rich households).

In addition, the implications of climate change costs on income distribution and risk of poverty are analysed.

The vulnerabilities of EU households highlighted in this study call for risk-specific policy measures at national and EU level and the transversality of climate change costs, especially in Southern EU, will require horizontal policy integration.

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What ways and means for a real strategic autonomy of the EU in the economic field?

The EU has always strenuously promoted economic integration with the rest of the world. In a peaceful world governed by a rules-based system, this strategy made Europe not only one of the most important global trading powers but also one of the most prosperous regions.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent Russian invasion of Ukraine have fundamentally altered the dynamics of openness and economic integration and foreshadowed a long-term uphill struggle to preserve the EU's prosperity. These disruptive events have underscored the need for the EU to enhance its resilience and ability to safeguard its strategic interests effectively.

As the EU is gearing up to respond to challenges that could signal a tectonic shift from the multilateral rules-based trading system that has been the hallmark of the post-World War II era, the EU can ill afford to be vague about what strategic autonomy means.

The study delves into these complexities, explores Europe's vulnerabilities and devises a number of recommendations on how to operationalise strategic autonomy.

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