



Programming document 2021–2024
Towards recovery and resilience

Work programme 2024

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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: www.eurofound.europa.eu

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List of acronyms

AI	Artificial intelligence
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interviews
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CEOS	Conditions of employment of other servants
CSRs	Country-specific recommendations
ECS	European Company Survey
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFC	Economic and Financial Committee
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGF	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EJM	European Jobs Monitor
ELA	European Labour Authority
EMAS	EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
EMCO	Employment Committee
EPMS	Eurofound performance monitoring system
EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office
EPSR	European Pillar of Social Rights
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
ERL	Electronic reserve list
ERM	European Restructuring Monitor

ESF	European Social Fund
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU-LFS	EU Labour Force Survey
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EWCS	European Working Conditions Survey
EWCTS	European Working Conditions Telephone Survey
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FTE	full-time equivalent
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
JRC	Joint Research Centre
KPI	Key performance indicator
MFF	Multiannual financial framework
NGEU	NextGenerationEU
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SLA	Service level agreement
SME	small- and medium sized enterprise
SPC	Social Protection Committee
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Foreword

In 2024, European citizens will give a new impetus to the EU policy agenda. After the elections, a new European Parliament and a new European Commission will shape new and existing EU priorities. There is no doubt that the issues related to digital transformation, a fair green transition and further building on the strategic autonomy will remain at the top of the agenda. Europe will continue to experience the repercussions of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the coming year, with implications for the quality of life and work of Europeans. There are also now substantial risks for further global destabilisation by a renewed Middle East conflict. This may contribute to increased energy prices, additional migration pressure and divisions in European societies. While the efforts of policymakers to reign in spiralling energy prices and tackle inflation have started to pay off, the European Commission forecasts subdued economic growth and the persistence of inflation for 2024. Citizens continue to feel the squeeze of rising prices on their living standards, and low-income households are likely to continue to struggle to meet the daily cost of living. The damage of a prolonged military conflict at the edge of the Union to the hopes and optimism of Europeans across the continent cannot be ignored. Neither can the toll that more frequent extreme weather events are taking, the result of rising global temperatures.

But while the economic, political and environmental pressures remain, the EU continues to prosper in many respects: employment remains strong, unemployment has fallen to a record low and wages have increased. There is no doubt that the focus on preserving jobs facilitated a faster than usual economic recovery. The challenge will be to further increase employment levels by attracting the inactive population to the labour market and improve job quality as the twin transitions of green and digital change transform the economy. Much of the continued strength of the EU depends on collectively progressing the vision for future growth along a path to carbon neutrality, one that leaves no-one behind.

It is against this background that Eurofound presents its work programme for 2024. Developed with its partners at EU and national levels, the projects planned for the year are tailored to provide policymakers with the evidence to deliver effective policies that tackle the challenges facing citizens. We trust this work programme will serve as a positive contribution to those shaping the policy agenda to improve the lives and work of all Europeans.

Ivailo Kalfin

Executive Director

Mission statement

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite Agency of the European Union.

Its Founding Regulation¹ states that the objective of the Agency shall be to provide the EU institutions and bodies, Member States and social partners with support for the purpose of shaping and implementing policies concerning the living and working conditions, devising employment policies and promoting the dialogue between management and labour. To that end, Eurofound shall enhance and disseminate knowledge, provide evidence and services for the purpose of policymaking, including research-based conclusions, and shall facilitate knowledge sharing among and between the European Union and national actors.

Eurofound's mission is to provide knowledge to support the development of better informed social, employment and work-related policies.

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

¹ Regulation (EU) 2019/127 of 16 January 2019 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) 1365/75.

I. General context for the period 2021–2024

The drafting of this programming document takes place in the aftermath of an unprecedented context. The EU, along with the rest of the world, has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. More than 14 million Ukrainians have been displaced, unfolding suffering and an unparalleled humanitarian and refugee crisis in Europe since the second World War. While the unprecedented response to COVID-19 from the EU and EU Member States prevented millions of deaths and a fully-fledged recession – with headline figures returning to the levels of pre-COVID-19 at the beginning of 2022 – the war in Ukraine led, inter alia, to an important surge in the prices of energy, food and other commodities, as well as the disruption of many established supply chain links, thereby exacerbating already existing headwinds on growth. Despite the strong headwinds, the European Commission's Summer 2023 Economic Forecast reported that the performance of the economy is expected to remain subdued with a growth rate of around 0.8% in 2023 and 1.4% in 2024. Inflation has decreased, although it is expected to be 6.5% in 2023 and decrease to just around 3.2% in 2024. While the rise in the cost of living is hitting low-income families disproportionately as they spend a higher fraction of their income on consumption and energy, a large majority of EU citizens will feel their purchasing power substantially weakened over the next period. And while energy prices have dropped since the peak mid-2022 period, companies in the EU remain confronted with this extremely challenging internal and external context with higher production costs, supply bottlenecks and higher financing costs leading to a sharp decrease in the business confidence. The high uncertainty linked to the economic environment, the outfall from the war in Ukraine, and the subdued global growth, especially the deceleration of growth in the US, is having a dampening effect on investments as well as spending and is leading to a stronger negative impact on the EU economic outlook with ensuing social consequences as the cost of living increases, the labour market situation remains challenging and social protection systems are put under pressure. In addition, EU member states are faced with the unprecedented challenge of hosting and integrating the millions of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war.² There can be no doubt that the EU will be facing an uncertain and challenging context in the coming years.

In light of the above, the implementation of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans under the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) will continue to play a major role in responding to the current challenges to the economy and society, while preparing Europe for the transition to a more competitive, green and digital economy. There can be little doubt that the waves of crisis and the twin transition will bring structural changes to the labour market and its functioning, as well as to how we live and work, and bring many challenges, including financial ones, forcing enterprises to adapt accordingly.

The continued restraining of households purchasing power, the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis as well as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine could compound the marked rise in perceptions of insecurity and concerns about prospects for the future, not only among the most marginalised but

² Eurofound has included and adapted a series of projects to monitor and analyse the impact of the war in Ukraine – the list of projects can be found in [Annex XIII](#).

also among larger parts of society, leading to expressions of division, disenchantment and distrust with the establishment, not least in relation to EU integration.

In parallel, the mega-drivers of structural change in Europe remain related to demography, technology, globalisation and climate change. Technological change continues apace. Automation, not least as enabled by artificial intelligence (AI), will both eliminate and create jobs and change the nature of work and how tasks are allocated, performed and assessed. With the rise in energy prices and the need to source energy from alternative sources, the energy transition has taken centre stage. Eurofound showed that while the transition to a carbon-neutral economy can be expected to create more jobs than it destroys, it also alters the structure of employment.³ This transition poses broader challenges to life and work in light of the ambitious targets set by the EU and should be added to the challenges linked to the outfall from the war in Ukraine as well as the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

Demographic change will intensify many current challenges. An ageing population, such as in Europe, accentuates labour shortages and skills mismatches and poses challenges to (long-term) health care and the sustainability and adequacy of pensions. The integration of the millions of refugees from Ukraine brings both opportunities and challenges in the short-term, as the needs for housing and public services will rise. The population of Africa is projected to double by 2050 (UN World Population Prospects 2017), while other regions are also likely to remain a source of migrants. This combination of demographic shortages in the EU and a demographic boom in neighbouring areas, combined with a potential food shortage in the latter areas, is likely to continue to place severe pressure on migration flows and the integrative capacity of societies and workplaces in Europe, which may in turn create challenges for the cohesion of the EU. Structural change brings many challenges for employment and living and working conditions, but it can also be an opportunity to advance towards a more inclusive, innovative and sustainable Europe.

To understand and hence influence these important issues, it is first necessary to monitor their development regularly. As highlighted by the Porto summit on the 7 May 2021, and reiterated at the Porto Summit on the 27 May 2023, the focus is likely to continue on issues related to social cohesion and convergence towards better living and working conditions. This attention becomes more salient in the light of the current rising cost of living and the looming recession. Attention should also be placed on ensuring that labour market adjustment to forthcoming structural change not only improves competitiveness and increases employment but also, as stated in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Centenary Declaration of June 2019, leads to 'a just transition to a future of work that contributes to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions'.⁴ It is clear that the impact of the pandemic as well as the war in Ukraine, the consequent recovery measures and various transitions are bound to have some level of asymmetric distributional effect; however, it is critical that these effects are fair.

³ Eurofound (2019), *The future of manufacturing in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

⁴ The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work was adopted at the 108th session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, 21 June 2019.

EU Policy context

2024 will be the last year of the European Council, Commission and Parliament's mandates, and the year in which the European Parliament elections will take place, the first one since Brexit has come into force. It will be the last year of the implementation of the European Council Strategic Agenda for 2019–2024 that includes four key priorities: protecting citizens and freedoms; developing a strong and vibrant economic base; building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe; and promoting European interests and values on the global stage. It will also be the last year of the implementation of President von der Leyen's Commission and the implementation of her political guidelines 2019–2024 that include six headlines: a European Green Deal; an economy that works for people; a Europe fit for the digital age; protecting our European way of life; a stronger Europe in the world; and a new push for European democracy.

While the above priorities will come to an end in 2024, others will only be halfway through. This longer timeframe reflects the longer-term policy objectives shared by the EU, its Member States and social partners to address long-term challenges and their ambition to maintain and improve living and working standards in Europe. The temporary Recovery and Resilience Facility which entered into force in 2021 and lasts until the end of 2026 will reach its midway point in terms of the use of the €723.8 billion made available to Member States (€385.8 billion in loans and €338 billion in grants). Within the Facility, the funds are spent around six pillars: (1) green transition; (2) digital transformation; (3) economic cohesion, productivity and competitiveness; (4) social and territorial cohesion; (5) health, economic, social and institutional resilience; (6) policies for the next generation. Member States have to spend 37% of the funds for climate-related activities and 20% for digital priorities.

In May 2021, the EU adopted their long-term climate and digital objectives. The European Climate Law sets into law the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050, and a collective, net greenhouse gas emissions reduction target (emissions after deduction of removals) of at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990. In July 2021, the Commission presented a comprehensive legal package 'Fit for 55' to provide the instruments to support the implementation of the climate law objective, including the Social Climate Fund. In June 2022, the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality was adopted. Regarding the digital strategy, the Commission proposed [a 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the digital decade](#) in March 2021, laying out key targets to be reached by the end of the decade. Among these are: that 80% of adults will have at least basic digital skills, 20 million ICT specialists will be employed and public services will be digitalised. In December 2022, the Council adopted the 2030 policy programme '[Path to the Digital Decade](#)', which ensures that the EU meets its objectives for a digital transformation in line with EU values including the strengthening of digital skills and education. In 2023, the Commission will propose a Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills.

Accompanying the digital and climate objectives, the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) (EPSR), presented on 4 March 2021, will be in the first half of its implementation to reach the EU social decade objectives.

The Action Plan includes three headline targets as well as several sub-targets to be reached by 2030:

1. At least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030.
2. At least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year.
3. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million by 2030.

In June 2021, the EPSCO agreed to include new headline indicators alongside the existing ones in the Social Scoreboard for use in the Joint Employment Report. The EPSR Action Plan is of central importance for Eurofound's work programme.

These priorities are being implemented in a changing context of geo-politics and pressure on prices. On 20–21 October 2022, the European Council adopted [conclusions](#) on Ukraine/Russia, critical infrastructure, energy and economy, and external relations, setting out a framework to tackle the current crisis.

Several EU instruments will have been presented, adopted or have entered into force. Thus, Eurofound will also include in its work the following implications of these new instruments.

- The entry into force since 2022 of the directives on transparent and predictable working conditions and on work–life balance for parents and carers, as well as the adoption of the Adequate Minimum Wages Directive and the Pay Transparency Directive.
- The European Commission proposals for EU legal instruments such as the proposed directive improving the working conditions of platform workers.
- The implementation of the Council recommendations establishing a European Child Guarantee; on early childhood education and care; and on affordable, high-quality long-term care, as well as the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU and on minimum income ensuring active inclusion.
- The implementation of EU strategies such as the Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027, the European Care Strategy, the EU skills agenda 2020–2025, the [2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade](#), [the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025](#); [the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy](#); a [Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#); [the Disability Strategy](#); and [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#);
- The European Commission presentation of an update of the interpretative communication on the implementation of the Working Time Directive and the revision of the Barcelona targets, and the Communication on 'The distributional impact of Member States' policies' and how to better assess it'.
- The European Commission has announced that 2024 will be the European Year of Mental Health.

Last but not least, the social partners' role in devising solutions which meet the needs of employers and workers is a crucial consideration for the work of Eurofound. The ILO Centenary Declaration of June 2019 proclaimed that 'the experience of the past century has confirmed that the continuous and concerted action of governments and representatives of employers and workers is essential to the achievement of social justice, democracy and the promotion of universal and lasting peace'. To achieve this objective, a newly adopted EU Social Dialogue Work Programme 2022–2024 is crucial.

The EU Social Partners have chosen six priorities for their joint work: telework and right to disconnect, Green Transition, youth employment, work-related privacy and surveillance, improving skills matching in Europe and capacity building. The social partners are negotiating an autonomous agreement on telework and the right to disconnect which, if signed, is to be implemented via a directive. The social partners also propose a Framework of Actions (Green Transition), as well as three seminars leading to signing a joint statement (youth employment), joint guidelines (work-related privacy and surveillance) and a joint research project (the skills priority).

Institutional context

The European Council adopted the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021–2027 on 17 December 2020, in which Eurofound's subsidy was frozen in real terms (allowing only for compensation of modest annual inflation) until 2027. Due to the significant rise of the Irish country coefficient since 2020, an additional compensatory subsidy increase of €650,000 has been granted for 2023 and will be requested from there on. Additionally, and to tackle the extraordinary pressure on the salary-related budget, an annual increase of the subsidy of €453,000 from 2023 on has been granted. The total subsidy request amounts to €24,054,000 for 2024. The additional funding will only partly offset the actual cost increases which requires Eurofound to continue actively seeking and implementing opportunities to further reduce costs, increase efficiency and achieve stronger synergies. Over the planning years, it will be increasingly challenging for Eurofound to fulfil its mandate at the expected standards, particularly as regards the data collection and monitoring of trends in living and working conditions. In this context, Eurofound will have to invest further in alternative measures to achieve its tasks, such as selecting a limited number of priorities and looking for collaboration and partnerships, primarily with other EU agencies and institutions.

More generally, Eurofound actively pursues long-term ecological, social and financial sustainability.

II. Multiannual and 2024 work programme

Introduction

Eurofound's priorities for 2021–2024 are shaped by the key challenges for social cohesion and just transitions in a changing environment in the context of the impact of the uncertain economic outlook, the war in Ukraine and the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis as outlined in the previous chapter. The Agency focuses on issues where it can draw on its core expertise in the areas of working conditions, industrial relations, employment, and living conditions to support its stakeholders, by providing evidence that can assist their policy action.

The Programming document 2021–2024 has six strategic areas that will be implemented through the following operational activities.

The first four are those as mandated in the Founding Regulation of the Agency.⁵

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. The data and analysis will inform policy makers on developments and highlight opportunities and challenges.
2. **Industrial relations and social dialogue:** functioning as a centre of expertise for monitoring and analysing developments in industrial relations and social dialogue, 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 social partner actions, thereby reflecting the importance of social dialogue in responding to the policy priorities, and contextual challenges and opportunities highlighted in the previous chapter.
3. **Employment and labour markets:** providing knowledge to identify changes in the labour market and inform employment policies to improve its functioning and inclusiveness in a rapidly changing labour market.
4. **Living conditions and quality of life:** mapping and analysing key elements for the improvement of living conditions of people, including information on their perception of quality of life and society. The activity will provide evidence and research-based conclusions for understanding the challenges faced by the population, in particular in relations to the 20 principles of the EPSR and the twin green and digital transition.

In addition, Eurofound will address the policy challenges in two transversal thematic activities.

5. **Anticipating and managing the impact of change:** providing evidence on structural changes, driven largely by digitalisation and climate change, but also by the COVID-19 crisis and the impact of the war in Ukraine that can be of use in ensuring just transitions which promote employment, good working conditions, social protection and workers' rights, while also

⁵ Article 1(2): 'The objectives of the Agency shall be to increase and disseminate knowledge to assist the Commission, other EU institutions and bodies, Member States and social partners in shaping and implementing policies aimed at the improvement of living and working conditions, in supporting employment policies and in promoting the dialogue between management and labour.'

improving labour productivity, competitiveness and prosperity as set out in the EU policy agenda.

6. **Promoting social cohesion and convergence:** contributing to the policy debate on fairness and informing policies aimed at improving social cohesion and promoting convergence toward better living and working standards in the EU. The activity will provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support linked to the EPSR and ensuing actions.



Analysis in these strategic areas will make use of Eurofound's monitoring tools. This includes the Eurofound surveys that will provide valuable information across the previous operational activities. Moreover, as the policy context is changing, Eurofound will reserve some flexible capacity to be able to respond to ad hoc requests and new stakeholders' needs during the programming period. It is in this context and for the implementation of the programme that two additional operational activities are included:

7. **Survey management and development**
8. **Reacting to ad hoc information requests**

Finally, two horizontal activities complement this programming document:

9. **Corporate communication**
10. **Management and development**

1. Multiannual objectives

Eurofound's strategic objective for the programming period 2021–2024:

To provide scientifically sound, unbiased, timely and policy relevant knowledge that contributes to better informed policies to improve living and working conditions and strengthen cohesion in a changing Europe.

Eurofound's contribution in each of the strategic areas aims to inform policymakers to:

- improve job quality and promote sustainability of work over the life course (Working conditions and sustainable work)
- promote dialogue between management and labour (Industrial relations and social dialogue)
- improve labour market functioning and inclusiveness (Employment and labour markets)
- improve quality of life and society (Living conditions and quality of life)
- ensuring just transitions that promote employment, good working conditions, social protection and workers' rights, while also improving labour productivity, competitiveness and prosperity (Anticipating and managing the impact of change)
- improving social cohesion and promoting convergence toward better living and working standards (Promoting social cohesion and convergence)

As a high-performing organisation, the Agency will make effective and efficient use of human and financial resources through sound management and continuous development of staff.

Performance monitoring

Eurofound uses various instruments to monitor, analyse and report on its performance towards achieving the expected results.⁶

Key performance indicators (KPIs) measure how well Eurofound performs in aspects that are specifically relevant for achieving its corporate strategic objective. These KPIs are supplemented with metrics on inputs, outputs and results. The analysis of the performance data supports management in implementing the programme of activities efficiently and effectively.

Regular stakeholder feedback and evaluations, including external evaluations carried out by the European Commission, deepen the understanding of the extent to which the quality and relevance of Eurofound's work and expertise is used and valued by its stakeholders (see also Annex IX)

Key performance indicators

Result indicators

Policy relevance (and timeliness) of contributions to policy development and debate through:

- uptake of Eurofound's expertise in European level-policy documents
- Eurofound's engagement with stakeholders in meetings and events
- uptake of Eurofound knowledge through the media
- uptake of and engagement with Eurofound's knowledge through its website and other corporate platforms

⁶ Its selection of KPIs and monitoring tools is also used for the performance of the Executive Director as per Commission Staff working document (2015).

Reliability and independence of the knowledge provided:

- recognition of the scientific quality of Eurofound's research

Input and output indicators

Effective and efficient use of human and financial resources indicated by:

- budget implementation
- efficient use of posts available in the establishment plan
- programme delivery

Most of these KPIs are also applied at Activity level as explained in Annex IX.

2. Operational activities

2.1 Activity 1: Working conditions and sustainable work

Multiannual perspective

Overview

In the programming period 2021–2024, the Agency will continue to monitor developments in working conditions. Change over time and progress achieved in the various dimensions of job quality will be assessed, as far as is feasible, and findings for different countries and groups of workers compared. This will include an analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working conditions and job quality, especially in relation to changes in work organisation such as telework, shift work and adapted workplaces. Non-standard forms of employment and the self-employed will be a specific focus. Building on the concept of sustainable work developed by Eurofound, the Agency will also provide evidence of the factors that allow more workers to stay in employment longer, which circumstances need to be improved, and how this can be achieved.

At the beginning of the programming period, Eurofound collected new data through conducting a European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS). As a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis, this data was gathered using computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI). Despite this change from face-to-face interviews used in the previous waves of the survey, Eurofound will be in a position to present comparative data on the job quality experienced by workers in Europe in 2021 using the established framework of seven dimensions of job quality.⁷ The possibilities to analyse trends over time will be limited given the change of mode in conducting the survey but they will be explored.

Secondary analyses of the 2021 dataset will also be conducted. Further analysis of working conditions may use data from the European Company Survey (ECS) 2019. Appropriate cooperation with other agencies and organisations will be sought for the next wave of the ECS.

⁷ The seven dimensions of job quality are physical environment; work intensity; working time quality; social environment; skills and discretion; prospects; and earnings.

The analysis of working conditions and job quality will have a specific focus on the longer-term structural impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include exploring whether types of work organisation or work patterns that substantially increased during 2020 – such as telework, adaptation of workplaces, shift work and redeployment, but also attention to health and safety standards at work – have been temporary phenomena limited to the lockdown situations or whether these natural experiments have resulted in these structural changes sustainably affecting workers' well-being. Cooperation will continue with EU-OSHA with regard to occupational health and safety.

Self-employment will be investigated with a focus on the job quality experienced, while issues such as economic dependency and autonomy, representation, and social protection will also be explored. Non-standard forms of employment will be considered in areas where they are growing or raise policy questions. They will also be taken up in Activity 5 (Anticipating and managing the impact of change), when there are new forms of employment, related to the identified drivers of change, which can have significant implications for employment and working conditions and social protection. The question as to whether labour institutions are fit for purpose to ensure employment in a flexible labour market that guarantees good working conditions and protection will be examined.

The ambition to improve working conditions and job quality is also linked to the requirement to address the consequences of demographic change. Demographic change, namely low fertility rates and longer life expectancy, may require the integration and retention of more workers in the labour market for longer. Based on its previous research on the factors that lead to more sustainable work, Eurofound could examine the employment and working conditions of workers, company practices and policies beyond the workplace that have proved to be effective to increase the employment rate of older workers and/or extend working life.

In the context of the longer-term approach to Eurofound surveys, a feasibility study setting out various scenarios future-proofing Eurofound surveys was drafted and discussed in a steering group. On the basis of the study and the discussion, it has been decided that in 2024 Eurofound will carry out the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) including some questions on working conditions and living conditions relevant to the aftermath of COVID-19. Respondents for this survey are recruited face-to-face. The majority of these respondents will also be interviewed face-to-face, to ensure that the findings of the survey can be compared with previous rounds of the EWCS. To test a possible transition of Eurofound surveys to an online mode of data administration, a smaller random subsample of respondents would be recruited to complete the interview online. This allows for a comparison of the answers between the two different modes of administration for a selection of questions from the EWCS. It further allows testing the impact of moving to a push-to-web approach on survey efficiency and data quality. As part of this 2024 survey, respondents will be asked to participate in a series of online follow-up questionnaires. These follow-up questionnaires will include questions from the EWCS that were not asked in the initial questionnaire – increasing the selection of variables for which trend breaks can be managed. This element also allows testing the effectiveness of recruiting respondents for follow-up questionnaires, the impact of the initial refusals to participate in such follow-up questionnaires, as well as survey attrition at a later stage on the sample composition.

Further analysis of working conditions is included in the two transversal thematic activities dealing with the impact of change (Activity 5) and social cohesion and convergence (Activity 6).

Objectives

This activity will address the challenge of improving job quality and making work sustainable over the life course by providing policymakers with facts and figures on working conditions and evidence on developments in job quality. The focus of the latter will be to identify and analyse pressing issues and specific groups at risk, also in light of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Through providing knowledge about policy interventions which have been successful in improving job quality and making work more sustainable, Eurofound will assist policy action.

Expected results

By the end of the programming period, Eurofound will have provided evidence of relevance to a wide range of existing and planned legal instruments, for example, with regard to working time, equal treatment and anti-discrimination. Research related to the COVID-19 impact on working conditions can feed into renewed discussions on, for example, telework regulations (including the right to disconnect), health and safety at work, design of workplaces and work organisation, and training and skills development options. Cooperation will continue with EU-OSHA with regard to occupational health and safety.

Data points on working conditions as experienced by workers in the EU in 2021 and the analysis of their job quality will allow relevant policymakers and/or evaluators to establish a snapshot of working conditions and job quality in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis – against which the impact of regulatory and soft initiatives including those introduced under the European Pillar of Social Rights (for example, the directive on work–life balance of parents and carers and the directive on transparent and predictable working conditions) can be assessed and gaps identified.

For many job quality indicators, data will be available on trends over time, though comparability of data collected in 2021 will be limited due to the change of mode in data collection. Nonetheless, this evidence will enable further progress towards the aim to support growth in the creation of quality jobs that can be measured as set out by the Commission’s President. Given the emphasis on the European Gender Equality Strategy and the Commission’s political guidelines, the analysis of gender differences in job quality will be of interest, particularly in view of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the implementation of the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025.

Through having provided evidence on the working conditions and job quality of those in non-standard forms of employment, Eurofound will have supported the goal of the EPSR to prevent employment relationships that lead to precarious working conditions. More particularly, the Agency will have contributed to identifying different forms of self-employment, including those with characteristics that might be considered as bogus self-employment, taking into account diverse national contexts. Evidence provided on the situation of the self-employed will have contributed to monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.

By providing knowledge about policy interventions that have been successful, Eurofound will have supported mutual learning and peer-review processes among the Member States. For example,

knowledge provided on the institutional frameworks and policies that support making work more sustainable, as evidenced by higher employment rates for older workers, will inform the European Semester process and the drafting of country-specific recommendations (CSRs).

2024 Work programme: Activity 1 – Working conditions and sustainable work

Overview

In 2024, fieldwork for the next wave of the EWCS will be conducted. Preparatory work for drafting the overview report, which will present a first analysis of the data in 2025, will start. In parallel, the programme of analysis of the 2021 EWCTS will be finalised. Following the publication of the report *Working conditions in the time of COVID-19: Implications for the future* in 2022, more in-depth analysis followed and in 2024, three studies will be completed: an analysis of working conditions and work practices in the hybrid workplace; an investigation of changing working time patterns; and an examination of the job quality of older workers.

Two new topics will be added in 2024. The importance of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) as primary vehicles of innovation is highlighted by the New Industrial Strategy for Europe. In a new project, Eurofound will examine the degree of digitalisation, digital skills, innovation and training strategies in European SMEs and assess how workers in SMEs compare to the average in terms of working conditions, job quality, digital skills and take-up of training. Challenges specific to the SME context, which could pose a barrier to skills development and good job quality, will be identified, as will policy initiatives supporting SMEs in the digital transition in terms of investment in innovation and training. The main data sources will be the EWCTS 2021 and the 2019 European Company Survey, including the 2020 follow-up interviews and expert interviews to be conducted in 2024. Cooperation with Cedefop and ETF will be sought.

The EPSR and its Action plan aim to foster fair and quality employment, emphasising that ‘regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship, workers have the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to social protection and training’. In a new piece of research, Eurofound will conceptualise the most vulnerable group of workers, meaning those in employment relationships that combine several unfavourable traits, for example involuntary part-time workers on very low hours contracts. Using key indicators from the EU LFS, EU-SILC and the EWCS, the groups most likely to engage in these forms of employment will be identified and trends assessed. This will be complemented with an analysis of the working and material conditions and the job quality of these workers. The final step will assess policy and legislative developments aimed at addressing vulnerability through providing access to training, social protection and supporting the transition to more secure forms of employment.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
The hybrid workplace in the post-Covid-19 era (continuation)	Policy brief Working paper	2025
Working time in the aftermath of the pandemic (continuation)	Report	2025
Exploitation of data from the EWCTS through the involvement of external researchers (continuation)	Blogs linking to academic articles	2024
Analysis of the job quality of older workers and company practices that support keeping older workers in employment (continuation)	Report	2025
Analysis of self-employment based on EWCS data and policies addressing the challenges associated with specific types of self-employment, including an assessment of existing evaluations of these policies (continuation)	Report Working paper	2024
Digital transition, job quality and workplace practices, including workers involvement, in SMEs (new)	Report	2025
Employment and working conditions of the most vulnerable workers: Addressing an ongoing policy challenge (new)	Report	2025
Preparatory work for the EWCS overview report (new)	Report	2025
Resources €216,000 and 5.1 FTE		

2.2 Activity 2: Industrial relations and social dialogue

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Eurofound will continue to support the dialogue between management and labour and will analyse developments in industrial relations systems and social dialogue. This comparative analysis of policies, institutional frameworks and practices will contribute also to the research in both Activities 5 and 6. This activity will build on Eurofound's established expertise on industrial relations, and will draw on the knowledge of the Network of Eurofound Correspondents at national level.

A first strand of work concerns the actors and processes of industrial relations, and the framework in which the employment relationship is shaped (by law and collective agreements). In this context, comparative information will be provided on national systems of industrial relations, including national social dialogue and collective bargaining processes and outcomes.

The framework of key dimensions of industrial relations and the dashboard of indicators established by the Agency will be updated during the programming period. Regular and timely updating of national industrial relations developments will be provided by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents, including updates to the EU PolicyWatch database, which contains policy initiatives by governments, social partners and other actors.

Reporting will also include the functioning of tripartite social dialogue and involvement of social partners in policymaking at national level, notably the Recovery and Resilience Plans. Data on wage and working time setting, including for minimum wages, will be reported regularly and findings will also be published on working time developments.⁸ At two-yearly intervals, the national profiles of working life, which include structural information on industrial relations systems and other dimensions of working life, will be updated. Data and findings on labour disputes, generated through the feasibility study and pilot project on an industrial action monitor conducted during the previous programming period, were presented in a final overview report.

A second strand of work concerns support for social dialogue. At EU level, Eurofound will continue to support the development of social dialogue through its studies on the representativeness of social partner organisations. The studies provide the empirical basis for the European Commission to take decisions on the participation of European organisations of management and labour in social dialogue committees and to consult under Article 154 TFEU, as well as to assess their representativeness in the context of their dialogue leading to Council decisions under Article 155 TFEU. Building on previous work, Eurofound can make available its expertise to support capacity-building activities for effective social dialogue, the EU Social Dialogue Committee and debates of the EU-level social partners in the framework of their work programme. Building on the recommendations made in Eurofound's report *Capacity-building for effective social dialogue* (2020), Eurofound will explore together with the social partners the development of further activities in this area, as well as looking at options for organisational support.

Activity 5 (Anticipating and managing the impact of change) will consider the role of social dialogue in the context of restructuring, climate change and digitalisation. Social partners, particularly at company level, play a key role in the anticipation and management of change, for example, in the adaptation of the workplace and job content, and when more significant restructuring is required. Similarly, Activity 6 (Promoting social cohesion and convergence) will consider the role of social dialogue in contributing to some social outcomes.

Objectives

Eurofound's objectives in this area are to support the EU institutions, Member States and social partners in promoting social dialogue, and to monitor and analyse developments in industrial relations systems and social dialogue at national and European levels. Eurofound will contribute regular, timely and authoritative information on a comparative basis on the main developments

⁸ Further analysis of wages and working time developments will be conducted in Activity 6 Promoting social cohesion and convergence.

affecting the actors, processes and key outcomes of industrial relations, and make available data and expertise to support social dialogue.

Expected results

Through the provision of reliable and timely information on trends and developments in national industrial relations systems and working life outcomes (including a report on labour disputes and industrial action), Eurofound will support the European institutions, national public authorities and social partners at various levels in their work of policy formation, social dialogue, collective bargaining and the regulation of employment relations. Eurofound's input will pay particular attention to the steps taken in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the impact of the war in Ukraine, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the twin transition.

Eurofound will analyse developments with a view to identifying ways to strengthen collective bargaining at national level and to support the social partners and European institutions in fostering social dialogue more widely, taking into account their joint work programme.

In particular, Eurofound findings will contribute to the functioning of European social dialogue, for example, facilitating decisions on representativeness for the consultation and negotiation, as well as the functioning of committees, and the implementation of Principle 8 of the EPSR ('Social dialogue and involvement of workers'). The findings will also contribute to the legislative process and policy coordination through the European Semester, thus providing valuable input on a range of policy-relevant themes as required by policymakers and industrial relations actors.

Specific findings will seek to contribute to the discussion on minimum wages (in the context of the Directive on adequate minimum wages), to initiatives promoting fair, decent and transparent wages (in line with Principle 6 of the EPSR and the gender pay equality priority), to the proposed Directive on Gender Pay Transparency, to monitoring the Working Time Directive and also contribute to actions in the wake of the implementation of the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU.

2024 Work programme: Activity 2 – Industrial relations and social dialogue

Overview

In 2024, Eurofound will continue to monitor developments in industrial relations and social dialogue at European level and in the Member States, and to support social dialogue.

The Agency will draw extensively on the work of the Network of Eurofound Correspondents to provide information on developments in industrial relations. Work begun in 2023 will be completed, and in 2025 a report will be published on the interaction of minimum wages with collective bargaining for low-paid groups. Likewise, the work on collective bargaining beyond pay will be finalised and, subject to feasibility, a dataset and report will be published in 2025. Regular monitoring of developments in industrial relations, social dialogue and working-life will generate national reports and thematic articles; the EU PolicyWatch database will continue to be updated and to serve as a flexible tool for observing policy developments in changing contexts; and preparations will be made for updating the working life country profiles for publication in 2025, in cooperation with ETF for the profiles of the new candidate countries. .

The role of national (tripartite or institutional) social dialogue in policy formation in the context of the EU semester will continue to be researched. Findings on the role of tripartite discussions, social dialogue and social partner involvement in national policy-making linked to the EU Recovery and Resilience package will be published in 2024, and a new cycle of work will begin with a focus on social partners' contribution to the twin transition policies. This will focus on policy processes linking European and national policy agendas – in particular the Employment Guidelines and the European Semester.

Comparative information will be published on developments affecting minimum wages in the context of the European policy debate (uprating of the levels, and changes in the systems for setting them), and preparation will begin for the update on working-time developments in 2023–24 (to be published in 2025). Policy-relevant topics will be selected for comparative reporting based on the work programme.

Eurofound will continue to support social dialogue, in particular by conducting studies on the representativeness of European social partners in specific sectors. Six studies will be published in 2024, unless the needs of stakeholders change in light of developments in the organisation of European social dialogue. As part of the capacity building activities, and following the successful implementation of the pilot Tripartite Exchange Seminars (TES) in 2022, a new phase of TES will be initiated in 2024 and in collaboration with ETF, Cedefop and EEA.

One new project will begin in 2024, with results to be published in 2025. It will continue Eurofound's work on gender pay transparency measures (which started in 2018, looking into the first experiences of such measures). In liaison with EIGE, in 2024 Eurofound will start to investigate further experiences with the implementation of gender pay transparency measures, notably, but not exclusively, in those Member States which have recently introduced new legislation. The research will include national evaluation studies and interviews with relevant actors involved. In addition, the research will seek to provide a deeper insight into how gender-neutral pay determination functions in practice. This will be done through case studies of selected examples in which the work of equal value principle was implemented in a gender-neutral manner either as general guidance, or within collective agreements or for company-level pay scales.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
The interaction of minimum wages with collective bargaining for low-paid groups (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2025
Representativeness studies (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six studies as part of rolling programme 	2024 2025
National reporting on industrial relations, social dialogue and working life (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National reports Thematic articles 	2024 2024
Monitoring policy developments and social partner involvement – EU PolicyWatch database (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated database Article 	2024

Collective bargaining beyond pay (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dataset • Report 	2025 2025
National tripartite social dialogue and policy formation in the context of the EU semester (continuation/ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report – RRF/European Semester • Report (social dialogue and the twin transition) • 3 workshops with sectoral social partners 	2024 2025
Working life country profiles (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated working life profiles 	2025
Minimum wages – annual review (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report • Article 	2024
Topical updates (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • Articles 	2024
Developments in working time (2023–24) (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 	2025
Further experiences with pay transparency measures (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report 	2025
Capacity building for effective social dialogue (Tripartite Exchange Seminars) (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar • Article 	2024
Resources €1,293,000 and 8.1 FTE		

2.3 Activity 3: Employment and labour markets

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Following an overall improvement in the employment situation in the aftermath of the Great Recession, the European labour markets were again faced with significant challenges when the COVID-19 pandemic was unleashed on the world in early 2020. The expectations of much higher levels of unemployment in some countries, regions, sectors and occupations, with the most precarious and vulnerable workers likely to be affected the most and longest in some cases were dampened by the strong policy responses from both the national and European level. In addition to this, in 2022 Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine triggered a humanitarian, and economic and an energy crisis with further repercussions on European economic situation and labour markets. Eurofound will fulfil its function to provide knowledge that can inform policy to help mitigate the consequences of both the pandemic and the war in Ukraine for work and employment and ensure the functioning and inclusiveness of the labour market in the face of the twin-green and digital transition. Eurofound will collect data, analyse trends in employment and labour market developments and provide the Commission and other EU institutions, Member States and social partners with support to devise employment policies. This will be achieved by continuing

Eurofound's role in the monitoring of trends on the labour market, the impacts of these trends for different groups and the lessons which can be drawn for policymakers.

A first research strand in this activity will focus on the change in the structure of the labour market, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the war in Ukraine. It will identify growing and declining sectors, occupations and qualifications, based on ongoing updates and analyses of Eurofound's established monitoring instruments, the European Jobs Monitor (EJM) and the European Restructuring Monitor (ERM), as well as Eurostat data. The EJM will continue to map job growth and decline across occupations and sectors and to identify shifts in the tasks, profiles and some aspects of the quality of jobs, including educational attainment. Some focus will be placed on jobs employing a large number of workers or those growing or declining fastest. The cooperation with the European Commission's JRC in this area is expected to continue. Work on restructuring could carry on with the ERM examination of large-scale restructuring events and legislative measures. This could be supplemented by more in-depth qualitative research on company practices at restructuring (including the role of social dialogue). Regional perspectives could also be considered, notably with a focus on those neighbouring countries and regions receiving a large number of refugees from Ukraine. Research on restructuring will continue to contribute to activities of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF) as well as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). The results of the two instruments will be presented in an integrated way to provide an overview of structural changes in labour markets.

The analysis of restructuring would also feed into Activity 5 (Anticipating and managing the impact of change) as regards some types of restructuring (for example, linked to climate change/the transition to a carbon-neutral economy, digitalisation, offshoring or reshoring) that would be further researched in that area.

A second research focus will be on labour shortages and underutilised potentials. Based on research conducted in the 2017–2020 work programme, analysis will mainly explore policy interventions and company practices. Eurofound will analyse various types of labour market and social policy measures as regards their effectiveness, with a specific focus on measures to tackle the functioning of certain sectors traditionally subject to labour shortages which were accentuated during the COVID-19 crisis and after. Supply side enabling factors are considered where relevant. Where possible, case studies on corporate initiatives to integrate Ukrainian migrants will be integrated.

Respective approaches can target the supply as well as the demand for labour and refer to fostering activation/active inclusion and management of workplace diversity, focusing on unused or underutilised human resources and talent (for example, in terms of geographic or occupational mobility; skills mismatches and working time, including 'labour market slack'; or oriented towards specific target groups underrepresented in the labour market, such as people with disabilities, women and young people). The related work of the Commission and the implementation of EU funds such as the ESF+, OECD and other organisations will be considered. Cooperation with Cedefop and the ELA will be explored as regards skills and labour mobility in the context of employment policies to tackle labour shortages. More generally, the use of other resources (for example, the European Job Vacancy statistics provided by Eurostat) and exchange with other European actors

working on the issue of labour shortages and underutilised potentials could be explored (for example, the European network of Public Employment Services).

This activity will also feed into the preparation of the new round of the ECS, foreseen for the next multiannual programme.

Objectives

Eurofound will monitor and analyse how the labour market structure is changing, including as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine, in terms of net job creation and job loss by sector and occupation, as well as key characteristics of the job structure (for example, employment polarisation and changing task composition in jobs). Furthermore, Eurofound will provide up-to-date information on restructuring, in terms of its employment effects, as well as on policies and legislation. Finally, this research activity will address the key challenge of labour shortages in certain sectors and occupations by exploring the effectiveness of relevant policy responses.

Expected results

Analysis of labour market structural change and shifts in supply and demand will allow stakeholders to go beyond standard statistical data to better understand recent trends and developments and identify related opportunities and challenges. This can contribute to the EU objective of quality jobs in regions, as well as to the development of the forthcoming comprehensive and coordinated industrial policy. In addition to generally monitoring large-scale restructuring in a period of substantial economic and labour market shock as result of the COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine, the ERM can be a knowledge base for activities of the EGF, the Just Transition Fund and the ESF+, particularly in light of the broadened scope of the EGF post-2020 to cover all large-scale restructurings.

EJM data will continue to inform policymakers on the extent to which employment shifts in national labour markets are polarising, upgrading or following some other pattern of change. Analysis of what works to tackle labour shortages and activate underused potentials will help policymakers in their design of specific instruments. Knowledge provided through this activity will be a useful basis to support the development of more effective policies, for example, when debating labour market reforms, including in the context of the European Semester, social dialogue, the implementation of ESF+ measures related to access to employment, the participation of young people and women, active ageing, and the integration of migrants and people with disabilities.

2024 Work programme: Activity 3 – Employment and labour markets

Overview

In 2024, Eurofound will continue its work on monitoring and analysing how the labour market structure is changing. Research on regional perspectives of labour market change following the COVID-19 pandemic will be finalised from 2023. Ongoing work as part of the European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) will continue to track restructuring activity based on media coverage. This database also forms the basis for projects conducted as part of Activity 5 and continuing from 2023. This refers to exploring company restructuring practices related to the twin transition, and to research on the impact of change caused by the twin transitions at the sectoral level.

Another two projects will continue from 2023, and include research on company practices tackling labour shortage related to the twin transition and in sectors in which shortages have been aggravated by COVID-19, and the analysis of job retention measures during COVID-19 pandemic and their effects on mitigating the longer-term consequences of COVID-19 for business, work and employment.

Three new projects will begin in 2024. Annual reporting on structural change in the labour market will be based on a new project investigating shifts in the employment structure in the first quarter of the 21st century. The research will answer several research questions and critically examine some assumptions about the accelerating pace of change (technological, globalisation/trade-related, demographic) and its impacts on labour markets. In particular, the project will explore whether average job tenure and the pace of job reallocation are decreasing/increasing, and whether shifts in the employment structure are upgrading or polarising.

In addition to the above, a new project will start to investigate job differences in task requirements and their implications for mobility and employment reallocation across the economy. When switching jobs, workers are more likely to opt for jobs that match their existing skill and/or job-task profiles. This project aims at measuring job differences in terms of task requirements, with the view to determine the magnitude and the nature of changes in job tasks following a job move. It will contribute to understandings of how jobs differ in terms of task requirements, what changes in tasks requirements are associated with job moves, where and for whom are the differences smallest or biggest and what specific task-based skills determine most of the differences. Cooperation with JRC will be sought.

Another new project will explore wage determinants in the EU, with a specific focus on gender gaps. The research will analyse the extent to which trends in educational attainment by gender (the gender educational gap) and wages by gender (the gender pay gap) are – or are not – correlated. It will also identify the determinants of any mismatch between wages and education levels by gender (subject choice, sector, occupation, and so on) taking account of tenure and other wage correlates. Cooperation with EIGE will be sought.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
Company/organisation practices to tackle labour shortages related to the twin transition and in sectors in which shortages have been aggravated by COVID-19 (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Case studies 	2024
Regional perspective of labour market change following the Covid-19 pandemic (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2024
COVID-19 support measures and their effects on mitigating the longer-term consequences of COVID-19 for business, work and employment (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Database update 	2024
European Restructuring Monitor events databases – maintenance and update (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated database Article 	2024

Annual reporting on structural change on the labour market: Shifts in the employment structure: is change accelerating or slowing? (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report • Dataset 	2025
Measuring jobs differences in task requirements: Implications for mobility and employment reallocation across the economy (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working paper 	2025
Wage determinants in the EU: the riddle of opposing gender gaps (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy brief 	2025
Resources EUR 198,000 and 5.2 FTE		

2.4 Activity 4: Living conditions and quality of life

Multiannual perspective

Overview

The health and economic outfall from the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications of the war in Ukraine, including the increase of the price of energy and of the cost of living, are deeply affecting the lives of people living in Europe. For this reason, the study of living conditions and quality of life has acquired even more importance, and Eurofound will continue to monitor trends in this area in light of these new challenges.

As mentioned in the sections on Activities 1 and 7 in relation to the discussion on the longer-term approach to Eurofound surveys, in 2024 Eurofound will carry out the EWCS which will include some questions on working conditions and living conditions relevant to the aftermath of COVID-19. Respondents for this survey are recruited face-to-face. The majority of these respondents will also be interviewed face-to-face, to ensure that the findings of the survey can be compared with previous rounds of the EWCS. To test the possible transition of Eurofound surveys to an online mode of data administration, a smaller random subsample of respondents would be recruited to complete the interview online. This will allow for a comparison of the answers between the two different modes of administration in the case of a selection of questions from the EWCS. It will further allow the impact of moving to a push-to-web approach on survey efficiency and data quality to be tested. As part of this 2024 survey, respondents will be asked to participate in a series of online follow-up questionnaires. These follow-up questionnaires will include questions from the EWCS that were not asked in the initial questionnaire – increasing the selection of variables for which trend breaks can be managed. This element also allows for the testing of the effectiveness of recruiting respondents for follow-up questionnaires and the impact of the initial refusals to participate in such follow-up questionnaires, as well as survey attrition at a later stage on the sample composition.

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) will be fielded in 2026 using lessons learnt from the 2024 EWCS test survey.

With European societies still enveloped in uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, including the increasing price of energy, Eurofound will investigate the impact of these new

crises on the living conditions of Europeans in different life stages and the role played by various initiatives implemented to alleviate the social hardship of various groups of citizens.

Furthermore, to respond to key demographic changes in European societies, Eurofound will focus on the implications of demographic changes. This involves capturing and assessing the quality of life of older citizens, including older workers and pensioners, and the analysis of income security and the role of public services in facilitating independent ageing. Eurofound's research perspective will address the preferences and opportunities of citizens to participate in society and employment, as well as to contribute to the development of services that enable older people to do so. The new demography also has implications for the younger generation and for women. This will be explored through research on young people and their social inclusion as well as their social mobility, including the transmission of advantages and disadvantages between generations. Building on previous research findings, Eurofound will investigate the differentiated impact of the crisis on men and women across several dimensions.

Many responses to the challenges and opportunities for the improvement of living conditions are designed, delivered or facilitated by institutions and public services that played a major role, while facing important challenges, during the COVID-19 crisis and following the Ukrainian war and the resulting wave of refugees. Adopting a social investment perspective, the adequacy, quality and fairness (access and affordability) of public services, with a potential focus on social, care and health services, will be investigated. The analysis will be based on available results of the proposed new Eurofound survey and other data sources, such as the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the Fundamental Rights Survey. Eurofound will inform policymakers by producing evidence on trends and drivers in this field in relation to the implementation of services included in Chapter III of the EPSR ('Social protection and inclusion'). Research on the quality of society will also contribute to Activity 6 (Promoting social cohesion and convergence) on issues such as trust, social tensions and quality of public services, as has been previously explored in the EQLS.

Objectives

The objectives of this activity are to monitor living conditions in the EU, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine on the cost of living, and to provide information on status, trends and risks, as well as to explore ways to improve living conditions in the EU. The research will look broadly at the quality of society and at communities at local or regional level, underlining the role of social protection for all citizens, with a special focus on the most vulnerable.

Another objective is to inform policy debates on ageing and measures to improve the social situation of older citizens, on support for independent living, and on developing quality services to complement informal care throughout the life course. Furthermore, the research will provide up-to-date information on the social situation of young people, men and women in order to support policy measures promoting their inclusion.

Expected results

The results of the research will shed light on the development of living conditions, including the impact of the health and economic fallout from the COVID-19 crisis and the implications of the war in Ukraine, and will contribute to initiatives and assessments of the implementation of the EPSR and sustaining the European social model, with particular attention paid to the regional dimension. Specific findings regarding groups affected by demographic change, care responsibilities, developments in work–life balance, as well as regarding access to quality public services, could feed into the debate on the European Care Strategy and the Youth Guarantee and be used in the European Semester for social policy-related CSRs, especially in relation to care. This research can support discussions around initiatives such as the European Child Guarantee while the findings on gender equality will contribute to the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025. Results from the research on care services can contribute to the Long-Term Care initiative, European Semester discussions related to social spending and social services, as well as to the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Cohesion Fund and ESF+. The findings could inform the annual reports of the Employment and Social Protection Committee and the European Commission’s reports on Employment and Social Developments in Europe.

2024 Work programme: Activity 4 – Living conditions and quality of life

Overview

In 2024, Eurofound will complete the research on ‘Becoming adults’, which focuses on the life and prospects of young people in the post-pandemic world. The study will shed light on the long-term impact of the pandemic on young people using new and original data collected in 2023. Furthermore, the analysis of the monitoring framework of the European Child Guarantee will come to an end, and the project on the developments in social protection during and after COVID-19 will be concluded, as well as the new research on the paths towards independent living.

The efforts of the EU to fight against the risk of poverty and social exclusion of children gained even more salience with the Ukrainian crisis and the displacement of more than 7 million refugees, the majority of whom are women and children. Eurofound will start a new research project to support national governments and the EU institutions in the implementation and evaluation of the European Child Guarantee. The project will investigate developments in the Member States levels of performance and their disparities, building on its previous work on convergence. Furthermore, it will review the progress made in the first two years of implementation, identifying areas in which more progress is needed. The main focus will be on the workforce needed to deliver the European Child Guarantee in areas of early childhood education and care, education, healthcare and other relevant sectors. The study will seek examples of good practice related to training, recruitment, creation of new roles and improving retention.

Considering the importance of care provision in our societies, and the crucial role played by informal caregivers, Eurofound will launch a new project investigating informal care and the challenges faced by informal caregivers in the EU. Care provided to people of all ages will be analysed, including caregiving to children, to people with disabilities or health issues and to elderly people. The project will establish the extent of informal caregiving carried out and examine values that people hold when

it comes to informal care work. Moreover, it will describe how this volume of work has evolved over time and will seek to identify the characteristics of carer groups highlighting the challenges faced by them. Given the composition of the carer group, the gender aspect will be taken into account in the analysis. Where possible the project will also look at the specific situation and challenges of live-in carers. The project will also map the EU policy landscape when it comes to support for informal carers by examining policies aiming at addressing the challenges faced by informal carers as well as attempts to formalise the employment of care workers working undeclared.

Finally, in 2024, Eurofound will launch a new project on mental health services. Prior to the pandemic, mental health problems were already prevalent and on the increase. The pandemic has made it clear that even groups deemed less vulnerable in this regard were at risk of mental health problems, with particularly large increases of mental health problems arising among young people. The war in Ukraine has added to the need for mental health care, due to the influx of refugees marked by their experiences. This project investigates trends and prevalence of mental health problems for different groups and how these needs are met in various countries. An overview of policy actions taken to address or prevent mental health problems will be provided, and problems hindering the access to mental health services. It draws on the literature, data from EU-SILC and Eurofound's *Living, working and COVID-19* e-survey, and input from the Network of Eurofound Correspondents.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
Addressing challenges to mental health in Europe: Trends and services (new)	• Report	2025
Care provision and the role of informal carers (new)	• Report	2025
European Child Guarantee: Two years on (new)	• Report	2025
Social Protection 2.0 (continuation)	• Report	2024
Paths towards independent living in Europe (continuation)	• Report	2024
Becoming adults: youth life and work in a post-pandemic world (continuation)	• Report • Dataset	2024
Analysis of the European Child Guarantee monitoring framework (continuation)	• Working paper	2024
Resources		
€278,000 and 4.2 FTE		

2.5 Activity 5: Anticipating and managing the impact of change

Multiannual perspective

Overview

The megatrends mentioned in Chapter 1 are driving a rapid change in the economy, society and labour market. Digitalisation and the transition to a carbon-neutral economy are currently two of the most relevant drivers, together with the anticipated longer-lasting impact of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as the implications of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Eurofound will focus on the impact of these drivers, sometimes associated with new business models and a different organisation of work, for employment creation and labour market integration, employment relations and working conditions, together with the implications for labour market institutions – particularly the regulatory framework, social dialogue and social protection. The roles, situations and challenges for specific types of organisations, such as SMEs and the public sector, could be explored.

Eurofound will examine aspects associated with the deployment of digitalisation, not least AI. This could include the use and ownership of private/personal data and, in the area of working conditions, issues such as leadership and HRM practices, remote and flexible working, teamwork, human-machine interaction, working time, control and surveillance. As far as possible, data from the EWCS and ECS could be exploited for this purpose. Cooperation with EU-OSHA and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) could be considered as regards the implications of digitalisation for health and safety, particularly psychosocial risks, and the ethics dimension of digitalisation. The same is true for Eurofound's collaboration with Cedefop in relation to skills requirements.

The impact of the transition to a carbon-neutral economy, in light of the target of a climate-neutral Europe, including the circular economy and NextGenerationEU, is less known. Eurofound will investigate the socioeconomic effects, such as on employment (shifts and transformation of jobs) and working conditions, as well as on society (for example, the distributional impacts of climate change policies). Some of this work can build on the results of the pilot project on the future of manufacturing (FOME) implemented by Eurofound. Cooperation will take place with the European Environmental Agency (EEA), including the European Climate and Health Observatory, as well as with Cedefop in relation to changing skill needs as appropriate.

Building on the research of Activity 3 (Employment and labour markets), restructuring in relevant sectors will be identified and analysed. Restructuring specifically linked to digitalisation and the transition to a carbon-neutral economy could be identified in the ERM databases, by adjusting the events database, and complemented with qualitative research. The analysis would also include the specific role of social dialogue and employee representatives in the design and implementation of the change process, for example, social plans, including support for the transitions of workers affected and other measures, such as active labour market policies, collected in the ERM support and legal databases.

Eurofound will also examine the impact, in the areas indicated in the first paragraph of this section, of new business models and work organisation. This could include, for example, an examination of new ways of cooperation and organisation between and within companies, such as those related to the platform or the circular economy. The already existing orientation of platform work will continue with exploring challenges and opportunities created by this new form of employment, with more focus on mapping and providing some assessment of the effectiveness of initiatives to tackle the challenges identified. Furthermore, issues such as discrimination, gender and age, and privacy could be explored.

Future scenarios of potential developments driven by digitalisation and the transition to a carbon-neutral economy have been published. This includes a discussion with stakeholders about possible pathways and measures to achieve the desired outcomes.

When addressing the implications for industrial relations in the research mentioned above, Eurofound will investigate the role, opportunities and challenges of traditional social dialogue and the emergence of new types of collective actions where they exist.

Objectives

Eurofound will explore the impact of digitalisation and the transition to a carbon-neutral economy on employment levels, working conditions (including social protection) and employment relations, and study the role of industrial relations and social dialogue in shaping and implementing such change, as well as the impact on society and citizens. Furthermore, the implications for labour market institutions, particularly social partners and the regulatory framework, as well as for different regions and social groups will be analysed. Existing measures and initiatives to manage change will be mapped and pathways towards a desirable future explored.

Expected results

By delivering on this objective, stakeholders will have the necessary evidence to inform decisions about where and how to intervene to manage change, optimise positive impacts and prevent the undesirable consequences of digitalisation and the transition to a carbon-neutral economy on society, work and employment in a labour market affected by the longer-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the war in Ukraine. The focus on the impact of these drivers of change on the workplace level will provide insight into how best to support employers and workers to take advantage of the opportunities and mitigate the challenges related to these developments, which figure high on the policy agenda: for example, included in NextGenerationEU, the European Green Deal, REPowerEU, the EU Strategic Agenda 2019–2024 or related to the Digital Services Act, the Digital Education Action Plan, and the update of the European Skills Agenda, the EU Strategy for Data or the EU White Paper on Artificial Intelligence. The research could also feed into the new SME strategy and activities related to help businesses adapt to globalisation, and thereby contribute to the Commission priorities on ‘Europe fit for the digital age’ and ‘An economy that works for people’.

Research on the twin transition related to digitalisation and climate change could provide relevant information for policymakers seeking solutions to make markets work better for consumers,

business, workers and society and for the sustainable development of cities and urban areas, and to support regions to improve their infrastructure and access to services as foreseen in the Commission priorities on 'Europe fit for the digital age', the 'European Green Deal', 'Cohesion and reforms' and 'Democracy and demography'. It will build on the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality. More specifically, the research conducted by Eurofound in connection with the socio-economic impact of the transition to a carbon neutral economy and monitoring the employment and social dimension of the green transition will ensure consistency and explore synergies and complementarities with the Commission's activities in this area.

The exploration of the impact on labour market institutions, including regulations and social partners, industrial relations and job quality, can support discussions on whether traditional forms of monitoring are fit for purpose in a changing world of work.

The examination of the distributional impacts of climate change policies, and of measures to maximise social justice is expected to inform the Just Transition Fund as well as the Social Climate Fund. The monitoring of reforms and newly emerging interventions can foster an exchange of policy approaches and lessons learned, in terms of informing on 'what works, what does not'.

2024 Work programme: Activity 5 – Anticipating and managing the impact of change

Overview

The year 2024 will see the continuation of a number of multiannual projects which allow Eurofound to regularly monitor and update its knowledge base with regard to topics linked to the digital transformation of work. This includes the web repository on policies linked to the platform economy, which enables Eurofound to provide information on national policy, legislative and collective bargaining evolutions. In addition, the online resource on digitalisation, which will be presented as a web hub on Eurofound's webpage, will be updated and enhanced. Three projects linked to the digital and green transitions, which were started in 2023, will also be finalised in 2024. One project focuses on the impact of changes caused by the twin transitions at the sectoral level, and another assesses the role, opportunities and challenges for policy actors in the twin transition. The third project analysis the impact of new developments in human-machine interaction on work organisation and working conditions.

The strong research focus on the impact of the green and digital transitions on the labour market and labour market actors will continue with a project aimed at exploring the ongoing adaptation strategies and restructuring events at company level. The project will assess whether there are new developments and approaches to ongoing adaptation strategies and restructuring events, and HR management practices to address these challenges, and to what extent change mechanisms, social dialogue agreements and other industrial relations and workers participation instruments played a role in mitigating the impact of the twin transitions in affected companies. The continued validity of the approach of the European Commission's Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring will be considered, as well as the extent to which companies are applying sustainable development goals and new HR practices and tools (for example, AI) in anticipating and implementing change management, and environmental and career development projects. Further

research will also be carried out on the transition to a low carbon economy to address gaps in the research identified in the concept paper prepared in 2022. Research will also build on projects implemented in 2022–2023. Depending on the findings of this research, Eurofound may further elaborate on the monitoring of the socio-ecological transition, with a focus on both living and working conditions at regional and Member States level. This could take into account the impact of such transitions on convergence or divergence between regions or countries as a result of policies to foster more sustainable development. Collaboration with the EEA is being sought.

Following on from the assessment of the impact of the increase in telework and hybrid work on workers carried out – among other things – using data from the 2021 EWCTS but also through projects implemented by Eurofound in 2022 and 2023, a new project will focus on how managers’ roles and functions are impacted by the shift towards more hybrid working in terms of challenges and opportunities. This will include, among other things, an assessment of the new skills required in less presence-based management systems and more output driven management systems; how supervisory and managerial roles are performed in the new working environment, how managers engage with employees and/or worker representatives on these issues and the extent to which lessons are being drawn from the pandemic period.

Building on Eurofound’s previous projects on platform work and the ongoing monitoring of policies and measures with regard to platform work through the web repository (see above), a new project will focus on the working conditions and management of online platform workers. It will explore the characteristics of online platform workers, and how they fare in relation to contractual arrangements and job quality including pay, work intensity, working time, occupational safety and health, social environment and career prospects. The planned survey of online platform workers will also seek to provide evidence on aspects previously unexplored such as the career goals of online platform workers, their information needs, whether people perform online platform work because it offers better alternatives than traditional employment and whether online platform work impacts on the workers’ skills development. Eurofound has an ongoing exchange and coordination with other agencies working on the issue of platform work including the ELA, CEDEFOP and EU-OSHA.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
Web repository for the platform economy (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database HTML 	2024
Maintenance of the online resource on digitalisation (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HTML 	2024
Impact of change caused by the twin transition at sector level (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Working paper 	2025
Just transition: Policy actors’ role, opportunities, and challenges (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy brief Working paper 	2024

The impact of new developments in human-machine interaction on work organisation and working conditions (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report • Working paper 	2024
Company restructuring approaches in the context of the twin transitions (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report • Working paper 	2025
Hybrid work: a new management challenge (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report 	2025
Further evidence on the socio-economic impact of the transition to a carbon-neutral economy monitoring the employment and social dimension of the green transition (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report • Data hub 	2025
Working conditions of online platform workers (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report • Dataset 	2025
Resources €324,000 and 4.9 FTE		

2.6 Activity 6: Promoting social cohesion and convergence

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Coming in the wake of the improvements in economic growth and labour market participation recorded in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, with the related implication on the surge of the cost of living, constitute a new, extraordinary challenge for the EU and its economic and social stability. The very severe financial consequences of the crisis, with rising inflation and the spike in energy prices, could trigger new fragmentations among Member States' performances, revealing the fragility of the progress in convergence patterns recently achieved. Furthermore, the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic and of the increase in the cost of energy could impact on inequalities among citizens, leaving many Europeans with a growing perception of economic and social insecurity and a sense of discontent, expressed at both national and European levels. The war in Ukraine and its economic implications for the cost of living may exacerbate these perceptions even more. Promoting upward convergence towards better working and living conditions and strengthening economic and social cohesion are of the utmost importance for the EU. With the aim of providing evidence to policymakers on how to mitigate the consequences of these crises and reduce economic and social fragmentations, Eurofound will continue to study the upward convergence theme of the previous work programme. It will more explicitly focus on the potential rise of new inequalities and how to explain and address the increased challenges to the social cohesion of the EU. In order to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the war in Ukraine, Eurofound will continue to report regularly on trends of upward convergence in the socioeconomic dimension, as well as in employment, working and living conditions in Europe at Member State and regional levels. The convergence web repository will be updated and further developed.

Furthermore, Eurofound will focus on the drivers and implications of economic and social convergence within the EU. The research will highlight the interrelationships between various dimensions of convergence and the factors that drive convergence, such as social investment, mobility and institutional frameworks (for example, regulation, welfare systems, public services and social dialogue, and structural reforms). The effect on economic and social convergence of the various recovery programmes put in place at European level to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic crisis will be investigated and a comparison with the 2008 recession will be made. This will provide information to policymakers on the possible means to promote convergence and the effectiveness of these initiatives. A specific focus will be placed on monitoring and explaining convergence in the euro area, not least in terms of the contrasts between different groups of countries and possible emerging asymmetries. Eurofound will also consider how industrial relations processes, in particular collective bargaining, is influencing the convergence of some outcomes.

Another strand of research will focus on social cohesion in the EU, to inform policymakers on the means to promote policies towards a fair and inclusive society. The COVID-19 pandemic and the increase of the cost of living following the war in Ukraine may have resulted in an entrenchment of existing inequalities or in the upsurge of new ones, affecting society and its citizens more broadly. Economic, social and health disparities, both in the labour market (such as income and employment security) and in terms of access to and quality of crucial goods and services such as healthcare, housing, education and social protection will be examined from a social cohesion perspective. Links with migration and integration will be also considered. This analysis will be conducted for various groups in society, including the middle classes. Using Eurofound survey data, the issue of future prospects and perceptions of fairness will be taken into account. Furthermore, Eurofound will investigate the expressions of a lack of cohesion associated not only with the material and economic situation, but also in terms of trust in institutions and tensions between groups in society (for example, ethnic and religious groups), as well as citizen participation.

Objectives

The overall objective of this activity is to investigate the links between the development of disparities among Member States and among social groups and developments in social cohesion in Europe. In particular, the activity aims to monitor the key trends and determinants of upward economic and social convergence in Europe, to understand the impact of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine on upward convergence and identify the key policy drivers for strengthening Member States' resilience and promoting sustainable upward convergence.

This activity also aims to investigate the trends and determinants of social cohesion, with a special emphasis on the impact of rising levels of disparities among social groups as a result of the COVID-19 and the increase of the cost of living following the war in Ukraine. The research will look into the main drivers of inequality and key policy levers to support the reduction of multidimensional inequalities and initiatives to promote social cohesion. It will also provide options for policymakers regarding actions to reduce inequalities and strengthen social cohesion in Europe.

Expected results

The evidence produced in this activity will inform policymakers on the latest trends on and drivers of convergence, inequalities and social cohesion in Europe, shedding light on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and of the war in Ukraine. Research on convergence relates to the EU objective of sustainable economic and social convergence and will help to identify gaps and overlaps between these two objectives. It will assess the developments of convergence trends and the effects of the various recovery programmes in reducing any fragmentation resulting from the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 crisis, including through the rapid restoration of the full functionality of the single market. It will seek to contribute to the debate about the EPSR, its implementation and monitoring role (in particular through the European Semester process), as well as about the reform of Economic and Monetary Union.

In addition, the work on cohesion can contribute to understanding the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the surge in the cost of living on inequalities in order to better frame the EU priorities identified by the European Council on strengthening cohesion, reducing inequalities and the role of social protection. The research on trust and discontent can contribute to the overall initiatives following the Future of Europe debate. For these reasons, the results produced as part of this activity would contribute to the work of the different services of the European Commission and the Employment Committee (EMCO), the Social Protection Committee (SPC), the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC), the Council and the European Parliament, including in relation to the European Semester.

2024 Work programme: Activity 6 – Promoting social cohesion and convergence

Overview

In 2024, Eurofound will provide new evidence on the debate on upward convergence concluding the project on the role of human capital on cohesion and convergence. The work on income inequalities will be completed, shedding light on the impact of the increased cost of living on different income groups, including the middle class, and households. Finally, the project on the social impact of migration and refugees will be published including analysis on the recent wave of Ukrainian refugees.

Eurofound will continue to inform policymakers on the latest trends on and drivers of upward convergence on the socio-economic dimension by updating and maintaining its dashboard of indicators and by providing regular annual updates on upward convergence in living and working in Europe, at both Member States and regional level.

Eurofound's work on convergence and inequalities will be complemented by a new project on the role of digitalisation. 'A Europe Fit for the Digital Age' is one of the six priorities set by President von der Leyen's Commission for 2019–2024. Many of the ensuing initiatives, for example the 2030 policy programme 'Path to the Digital Decade', concerns increasing the digital skills and uptake of the EU citizens. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is seen as a catalyst for this digital transition designed to empower convergence within and between EU Member States. Eurofound aims at firstly analysing the long-term trends in the uptake and usage of digital technologies by EU citizens up to 2020 and the progress reached by countries in fulfilling the targets set in their RRF plans. Secondly, the project will assess if digitalisation is a driver of economic and social convergence in the EU, with a

focus on income, employment and poverty. The convergence analysis will rely on Eurostat's survey on the use of ICT in households and by individuals (Community statistics on information society (CSIS)), complemented by a study of indicators that track the digital performance of countries across the years (such as the composite Digital Economy and Society Index).

Building on the work done in 2019 and using data from the 2021 Household Finance and Consumption Survey, Eurofound will review how the levels of overall wealth distribution developed during the recent period. In recent years, some economic sectors declined and others grew, and consumption patterns changed, reflecting decreases in incomes and reliance on financial support for some and increasing saving capacity for others. Building on previously developed expertise, Eurofound will seek to identify changes in overall wealth distribution and will produce a more detailed account of the size and composition of the population with no or negative wealth, and of the asset composition of the wealth quantiles.

Finally, in 2024 Eurofound will shed further light on the dynamics of social cohesion, polarisation in perceived trust in institutions and satisfaction with democracy in Europe. In the light of the COVID-19 crisis and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, a new project will seek an evidence-based assessment of social developments that can lead to tensions, withdrawal, or radicalisation and identify the main dimension of the above-mentioned polarisation in European societies over the last decade. Looking at the 2024 European elections, an investigation of new forms of inclusive participation and their possible effect on polarisation will be carried out. This will include the recent upsurge of social media and the rise of policymaking platforms/ online advocacy groups. The impact of polarisation on relevant social cohesion and active citizenship indicators will also be investigated.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
State of the play of upward convergence in 2024 (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy brief 	2024
Reaching out to the disconnected – Economic and social Convergence in EU's digital societies (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2025
The dynamics of wealth distribution in Europe (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2025
Social cohesion and new forms of inclusive participation (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2025
Social Impact of Migration: Addressing challenges in receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2024
Income inequalities and the middle class (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2024
The role of human capital on cohesion and Convergence (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 	2024
Resources €201, 000 and 4.2 FTE		

2.7 Activity 7: Survey management and development

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Eurofound surveys cover a broad range of policy-relevant areas within Eurofound's strategic priorities and feed into a substantial part of the multiannual work programme. The Agency has been conducting three Europe-wide surveys over many years (EWCS since 1990, EQLS since 2003 and ECS since 2004).

In recent years, Eurofound has been preparing a long-term strategy aimed at making the surveys future-proof and financially sustainable. The frequency of the surveys has been reviewed, new data collection modes have been explored and non-response rates have been analysed.

For the period 2021–2024, Eurofound plans to implement the following actions.

It will continue to develop the long-term survey strategy, which includes an examination of the viability of different and more cost-effective data-collection modes, considering both overall survey quality and comparability over time. A further element is to reconsider the way the surveys are managed and includes assessing different options for the way the surveys are organised in terms of contracting and opportunities for further collaboration with other EU agencies, as well as better synergy and options for enlarging sample sizes through more collaboration with Member States. Further developmental work will include the investigation of potential complementary sources of data, such as big data analysis and non-probabilistic, non-random online surveys (building on the experience of the COVID-19 e-survey).

Fielded in 2021, an EWCS via telephone interviewing (EWCTS 2021) replaced the face-to-face EWCS 2020 for which fieldwork had to be stopped because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to force majeure, the mode change to CATI was the only possible way of restarting the fieldwork in the foreseeable future for Eurofound, as well as for most other statistical offices in the world. Respondents to the EWCS 2020 who gave permission to be recontacted were followed up.

In the context of the longer-term approach to Eurofound surveys, a feasibility study setting out various scenarios for future-proofing Eurofound surveys was drafted and discussed in a steering group. On the basis of the study and the discussion, it has been decided that in 2024 Eurofound will carry out the EWCS including some questions on working conditions and living conditions relevant to the aftermath of COVID-19. Respondents for this survey are recruited face-to-face. The majority of these respondents will also be interviewed face-to-face, to ensure that the findings of the survey can be compared with previous rounds of the EWCS. To test a possible transition of Eurofound surveys to an online mode of data administration, a smaller random subsample of respondents would be recruited to complete the interview online. This allows for a comparison of the answers between the two different modes of administration for a selection of questions from the EWCS. It further allows testing the impact of moving to a push-to-web approach on survey efficiency and data quality. As part of this 2024 survey, respondents will be asked to participate in a series of online follow-up questionnaires. These follow-up questionnaires will include questions from the EWCS that were not

asked in the initial questionnaire – increasing the selection of variables for which trend breaks can be managed. This element also allows testing the effectiveness of recruiting respondents for follow-up questionnaires, the impact of the initial refusals to participate in such follow-up questionnaires, as well as survey attrition at a later stage on the sample composition.

The EQLS will be fielded in 2026–2027 using lessons learnt from the 2024 EWCS test survey.

A steering group with Board representatives accompanied the feasibility study and will monitor any potential further development of the future approach to surveys.

A new round of the ECS will take place in 2028–2029. Appropriate cooperation partners will be sought. The 2019 survey covered the areas of work organisation, HR practices, workers' participation, social dialogue, skills strategies and digitalisation at workplace level.

Exploitation of the data of previous surveys, namely the EWCTS, will also continue during the multiannual cycle as indicated in Activity 1.

Activity 7 has three strands of work:

- fielding the surveys: Preparation and implementation of fieldwork
- methodological survey development: Making the surveys future-proof
- survey management: Improving the organisation of the surveys

Objectives

The surveys inform and guide a substantial part of Eurofound's research work. During the previous programming period, the long-term approach to the surveys was reassessed and Eurofound began developing a long-term strategy for the future of the surveys, aimed at a better use of resources while keeping abreast of methodological developments.

The Agency will examine the viability of different and more cost-effective data collection modes, looking at overall survey quality as well as comparability with data collected in the past. Another objective is to improve the way the surveys are organised in terms of contracting and further collaboration and better synergy with other EU agencies and Member States.

Expected results

Eurofound will have gathered the necessary information to develop the strategy for the future of the surveys to ensure that the Agency continues to be a key data source of policy relevance in its areas of expertise.

2024 Work programme: Activity 7 – Survey management and development

Overview

In Spring 2024, Eurofound will field the EWCS 2024 with face-to-face interviews to collect comparable trend data and push-to-web interviews to test the transition to online, following the mandate of the Management Board. Follow-up interviews will be organised in-house to ensure the full EWCS questionnaire is collected from all respondents. The first follow-up round will take place at the end of 2024 and the following will take place in 2025.

Preparations for the 2026 EQLS will continue in 2024 with the development of the design of the survey and the publishing of the tender specifications, drawing on the lessons learned from the EWCS 2024.

Finally, in 2024, Eurofound will further consider options to adapt the survey management practices to the characteristics of our future-proof surveys.

In collaboration with the ETF, the Agency will field a new round of the e-survey in 2024, in the EU Member States, the Western Balkan countries and Türkiye.

The Agency will continue its work with the Steering Group on the Future of the Surveys to test the transition to online data collection and ensure that high quality, policy- and research-relevant comparable data on working conditions and quality of life can be collected in the future.

The Activity also requires resources to maintain and improve methodological know-how.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
Preparation and implementation of the EWCS 2024 (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dataset Internal reports Technical report Quality control report 	2024 2024 2025 2025
Preparing for the EQLS 2026 (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender specifications 	2024
Survey management (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal paper 	2024
Methodological survey development (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dataset Working Paper 	2024
E-survey (continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dataset Working paper 	2024
Resources €2,094,000 and 5.0 FTE (including resources allocated for conducting survey)		

2.8 Activity 8: Reacting to ad hoc information requests

Multiannual perspective

Overview

To be able to react to changing information needs that could not be foreseen at the time of programme development and to ad hoc requests from policymakers, Eurofound reserves the capacity to provide background papers, customised reports and short studies on request to its stakeholders. The capacity reserved can also be used to research upcoming and unforeseen issues at the initiative of Eurofound. The Executive Board will be fully informed about requests received and the ad hoc research work.

Objectives

To provide relevant knowledge to the Agency's stakeholders on demand.

Expected results

Eurofound will have the flexibility to react to changing information needs and to provide evidence on emerging, unforeseen issues which require policy action.

The European Commission, the European Council and its committees, the European Parliament, Member States through their Presidencies of the European Council, national governments and the European social partners can receive tailor-made information on issues in Eurofound's remit on request.

2024 Work programme: Activity 8 – Reacting to ad hoc information requests

Outputs

Customised reports of existing findings
Studies in response to stakeholder enquiries
Background papers
Contributions to publications
Reports paid for by stakeholders

Resources

€325,000 and 1.7 FTE

3. Horizontal activities

3.1 Activity 9: Communication

The multiannual perspective

Overview

Communication is of critical importance in achieving Eurofound's primary goal of providing knowledge, research-based conclusions, evidence-based information, analysis and services for policymaking, as well as facilitating knowledge sharing among and between stakeholders.

While still adapting to a revised Founding Regulation, Eurofound continues to work within a changing communication context with a constantly evolving policy setting and an information and dissemination climate that has experienced intense disruption over recent years, not least with the impact of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Priorities have been adjusted continually in response and new tools and channels have evolved to adapt to the information needs of policymakers and other stakeholders.

Against this background, Eurofound's efforts must be increasingly keenly targeted at ensuring that its knowledge reaches the relevant actors at EU and national levels to shape and implement better policies in the core areas of the Agency's remit. User feedback, analytics, persona analysis and evaluations continue to provide a clear picture of how best to do that in the most timely, relevant and cost-effective way.

Objectives

Four key objectives provide the framework for the corporate communication and dissemination plan during this period:

1. Implement a policy focus (in line with relevant EU top priorities) in all communication outputs, prioritising the production and promotion of policy-relevant products over others and highlighting expertise.
2. Implement a Digital-First approach to content production and dissemination, prioritising online and mobile channels over traditional ones.
3. Exploit collaborative partnerships for communication activities with EU institutions (specifically the Commission and Parliament), other EU agencies, social partners, international organisations and other multipliers.
4. Further develop national-level communication (while continuing to prioritise the EU level), integrating a national approach to analysis and data provision, strengthening communication with EU bodies of national representatives (for example, EU committees) and exploring strategic collaboration aimed at tripartite bodies, national governments and social partners and other relevant organisations.

Expected results

Communication activity will ensure policymakers and key stakeholders have timely and easy access to Eurofound's most relevant information, findings and analysis in a manner and format that allows

them to shape better policies for the improvement of social, employment and work-related issues. The Digital First approach will continue to enhance this further and the migration of the corporate website to Drupal 10 will, among other things, allow for improved data visualisation and interactivity online. Campaigns targeted at raising awareness of Eurofound findings, its areas of expertise and programme of work, will ensure stakeholders know where and how to access the right information in the right way to facilitate their work. The results of this activity specifically – but not exclusively – will be to increase web download numbers and web user activity, increase the number of references to Eurofound’s work in EU policy documents, increase the number of Eurofound expert contributions and engagements relevant to key policy debates, increase the take-up of Eurofound’s work by media outlets, augment the number of Eurofound citations in academic journals and amplify uptake in the media. Successful partnerships with international organisations, institutions, EU agencies, EU Member States and Presidencies and national bodies will further leverage communication and engagement opportunities and increase outreach. Other results will be to further increase awareness about the Agency and its work with new audiences and improve levels of satisfaction of existing groups. This will be reflected in continued positive user feedback, ongoing requests for targeted expertise from policymakers at EU and national levels, wider media reach and impact, higher levels of social media interaction and increased numbers of registered contacts. In the context of the new European Parliament elections and institutional transition to take place in 2024, Eurofound will prepare in 2023 and 2024 to harness the arrival of new MEPs and a new College of Commissioners to strengthen Eurofound’s partnerships and ensure continued collaboration on communication activities.

2024 Work programme: Activity 9 – Communication and dissemination plan

Overview

Eurofound will continue to adapt its communication activities at corporate level to ensure optimal presentation and promotion of the 2024 work programme’s priorities and outputs.

The EU policy focus in this period, and in particular the overarching priorities in the context of the COVID-19 social and economic recovery and the use of the RRF funds around its key priorities, the impact of the war in Ukraine, digital and climate change, as well as the mid-way point of the implementation of the Action Plan of EPSR, will dictate to a large degree the orientation and prioritisation of the communication activities and approach. During 2024, work will continue to further improve multimedia and multilingual access to key messages and policy issues across these EU priorities.

2024 will also be a period of transition for the institutions with the final year of the Von der Leyen Commission and the current term of the European Parliament, with new elections in 2024. This will be an opportunity for Eurofound to further promote its findings and contributions. To prepare for these institutional changes, Eurofound will adapt and produce relevant communication outputs and activities. This will allow Eurofound to harness the arrival of new MEPs and a new College of Commissioners to strengthen Eurofound’s partnerships and ensure continued collaboration on communication activities.

In 2024, there will be particular emphasis on European Commission initiatives, European Parliament priorities and the work of the EU Presidencies of Belgium and Hungary.

Implementation of the Agency's Digital First initiative will continue to play out across several key communication dimensions:

- Further work will be carried out in the digital sphere on data management and visualisation capacity, further building on the migration of the website to Drupal 10 and developing the upgraded Eurofound data explorer and exploiting the new data stories format to provide better access to and use of all survey and other data resources.
- The corporate webinar series will be expanded to address emerging policy priorities along with the 'Ask the expert' initiative and the ongoing podcast series 'EurofoundTalks'.
- The in-house studio capacity will be exploited further to ensure improved access and enhanced cost efficiencies in the delivery of video and audio of Eurofound expertise to key stakeholders.

The focus on making Eurofound's experts and expertise more accessible in different forms across different channels will also continue building on the Ask the Expert online webinar series and the targeted Brussels briefings.

Collaboration and active engagement with key partners among the EU Institutions, social partners, tripartite bodies and governments will continue to be prioritised – particularly in the context of the institutional transition and European elections in 2024 – and formalised for all communication activities, notably in the areas of targeted policy-oriented contributions and initiatives as well as press and social media campaigns. Specific collaboration on events and publications will continue with other EU agencies and institutions.

Consolidation of the outreach work to expand the reach to national audiences via a range of new digital and other channels will build on activities and partnerships established during 2022–2023, such as the new virtual visits programme, including the Network of Eurofound Correspondents as well as other tripartite institutions and national institutional networks. The Irish outreach programme will be further strengthened during 2024 consolidating links with the Agency's host country.

Eurofound's collaboration with the EU Presidencies will also continue with input to the Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies during 2024.

The Living and working in Europe campaign will continue to be strengthened with additional elements including the annual event, yearbook and survey highlights which will be produced and published to coincide with Europe Day.

The communication and dissemination plan also includes all communication outputs mentioned in the operational activities, which will be promoted and disseminated within the outlined framework outlined above.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
Corporate production and publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate outputs • Corporate publications • Database • Datasets • Data visualisations • Web pages • Web hosting and applications • Library • Translations 	2024
Corporate campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media packages • Advertising • Media alerts • Photos • Events • Webinars • Visits • Podcasts • Videos • Audio • Dissemination 	2024
Resources €985,000 and 16.4 FTE		

3.2 Activity 10: Management and development

Multiannual perspective

Overview

Eurofound operates within the EU's institutional framework. It is committed to delivering results to a high professional standard while at the same time making efficient and effective use of the resources available. Eurofound's activities are executed in an open and transparent (regulatory) framework of governance and performed in a spirit of collaboration and teamwork. In supporting the strategic objective of the organisation, the focus will be on the following.

Developing and engaging people and strengthening capabilities to implement a high-performing organisation

- Continuous investment in the training and development of staff in support of the proposed areas of intervention.
- Managing the engagement and commitment of the people to the organisation's objectives aimed at increased performance in the organisation and retention of staff through a sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability.

Providing the information and intelligence to make well-informed decisions about the use of the scarce resources

- The programming cycle is supported by data and evidence on its achievement according to established evaluation criteria and performance monitoring information with a view to organisational improvement, learning and future sustainability.
- Further strengthening activity-based budgeting and activity-based management in support of the Agency's outsourcing strategy and of optimising the allocation of internal resources.
- Efficient and effective working methods and delivery of tasks through the application of project and process management standards in the context of the Digital First strategy.

Supporting results-based operations in line with regulatory compliance and governance principles for EU agencies

- Promoting ethical behaviour and conduct to avoid conflicts of interest and irregularities and ensuring zero tolerance for fraud, based on the Agency's Internal control framework.
- Further professionalising the Agency's approach to quality management in line with established and emerging practices in comparable EU agencies and appropriate to Eurofound's operations.

Objectives

The Agency carries out its mandate with staff performing towards their potential through:

- the implementation of development programmes with blended learning options
- support from effective professional project and process management tools
- access to data and analysis about programme implementation based on efficient digital solutions

During the programming period, the Agency will implement its sustainability framework about economic, social and environmental impact with standards that ensure comparable measurement.

Expected results

Optimisation of competencies and capabilities of staff in meeting the programme's requirements.

Reasonable assurance of sound financial management, based on the building blocks of internal control and specific audits.

2024 Work programme: Activity 10 – Management and development

Overview

- Organisational performance analysis and process improvements.
- Well-functioning internal control components and zero-tolerance to fraud through annual risks assessments, regular monitoring and the annual corporate ethics month
- Further implementation of the framework for ecological, social and financial sustainability.
- Further implementation of the Learning and Development strategy.
- Further implementation of the information security and cyber-security regulations.
- Exploration of AI, machine learning and data analysis as important emerging technologies.

Projects and outputs

Project description	Outputs	Year
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final ex ante evaluation report for the 2025-2028 programming document Biennial user feedback report 	2024
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings of Advisory committees, Executive Board and Management Board Internal control annual assessment and risk review Corporate annual activity report 2023, including sustainability report 	2024
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMAS re-certification 	2024
Learning & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing updated Competency Framework for improved needs analysis and better training delivery. 	2024
Resources €266,000 and 5.3 FTE		

4. Implementation approach

4.1 Methodologies and tools

Eurofound will implement a wide range of research approaches, methodologies and data sources in this programming period. The objective is to ensure (comparative) analysis that also cover different breakdowns according to gender, age and sectors where relevant. Eurofound survey instruments have already been described under '2.7 Activity 7: Survey management and development'. Other methodologies and tools are:

- Analysis by Eurofound of other datasets, mainly those of Eurostat. This includes both the direct use of Eurostat and other data sources but also the matching of various datasets to create unique sources of information, for example, as is done with the European Jobs Monitor.
- Gathering national-level information and comparing regulations and practices. This is primarily conducted with the Network of Eurofound Correspondents based in all Member States. The representativeness studies are an example of this approach. The Network of Eurofound Correspondents contributes to all areas of Eurofound's research (especially in areas where no harmonised data sources exist) and by describing and comparing institutional frameworks, policies and practices.
- The systematising of information publicly available, such as in the ERM. Eurofound will be exploring other options to use big data and user-generated information.
- The approach to policy evaluation is primarily based on an assessment of previously conducted evaluations. This entails a compilation and critical review of many studies and, when feasible, meta-evaluations. Another feasible approach is the use of expert interviews.

- With the increased focus on change in this programming period, some emphasis will be placed on future-oriented methodologies, such as scenario building, forecasting and backcasting. These will often be used together in discussion with stakeholder groups. Explorative methodologies can also include case studies of emerging, but as yet rather minor, phenomena.
- This programming period will make more use of research conducted by others, in academia, other EU institutions and bodies, international organisations and think tanks, etc. Such research can be used for several issues in the two strategic areas, 'Anticipating and managing the impact of change' and 'Promoting social cohesion and convergence'. It can also be applied to provide policy-relevant inputs to key policy debates.
- The Agency will explore the use of national administrative registers and databases where appropriate, while being aware that access to and comparability of data are difficult.
- There will be an option for ad hoc studies, both those requested by the stakeholders or initiated by Eurofound in response to changing policy needs over the programming period.

Most of the resources will be devoted to surveys and the Network of Eurofound Correspondents. Other tools and approaches will be considered where appropriate. During the programming period e-surveys have been implemented on several occasions and have become a part of the toolbox of Eurofound.

4.2 Collaboration and partnerships⁹

Eurofound seeks and maintains a close working relationship with other EU agencies. It will continue to build on the well-established collaboration with the sister Agencies in the employment and social affairs policy field (Cedefop, ELA, ETF, and EU-OSHA), as well as other agencies related to Eurofound's work (EEA, EIGE, FRA). Memoranda of understanding and coordination of work programmes can lead to the selection of joint activities of shared interest. The Agencies organise annual meetings between the Directors and exchange work programmes to avoid overlaps and identify areas and subjects where enhanced collaboration should take place. Surveys is an area where collaboration is well established, for example EU-OSHA is a member of the EWCS questionnaire development group as it supplies data to the OSH Barometer, Eurofound is a member of the expert group of the EU-OSHA Worker Exposure Survey (WES) and exchange of experience is planned with regard to the preparation of the ECS and the work coming out of the Futures of Surveys. ETF has joined forces with EF to field the Living and Working and COVID-19 in countries beyond the EU-27. Platform work is an area where exchange of expertise and knowledge has increased, as each Agency provides a complementary angle to the subject. This also holds for the topic of youth. Furthermore, Eurofound will explore partnership with Cedefop, ETF and other EU agencies and institutions for the next European Company Survey.

Collaboration in sharing methodologies and common approaches continues, notably in the area of risk management, cyber security, performance indicators, evaluation and project management. More specifically, in 2024, together with Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA, the Agency will fully collaborate on following up on the recommendations from the evaluation of the individual evaluations of each agency, and cross-cutting analysis as commissioned by DG EMPL.

⁹ [Stakeholders and partners | Eurofound \(europa.eu\)](#) – Collaboration agreements/Memoranda of Understanding with sister Agencies.

Eurofound will seek to further build on its relations with the European Commission. This includes exploration of more coordination between the Network of Eurofound Correspondents and networks under the responsibility of DG EMPL. Eurofound will maintain its regular exchanges with the European Commission in order to continue to take into consideration the relevant research activities funded under EU programmes to ensure synergies between the Agency and the European Commission. Activities with the JRC will continue. Cooperation could be expanded in areas such as supporting the capacity building of social partners in the framework of the ESF and on restructuring activities for the EGF. The Agency will also explore new avenues of cooperation with DG Research and Innovation to expand Eurofound's current role.

Cooperation in the area of communication is covered in more detailed in the section 3.1 'Activity 9: Communication'. Eurofound will seek opportunities to cooperate with entities that can act as multipliers or provide synergies with the Agency's activity. This would include exploring cooperation with entities mentioned in the Founding Regulation, such as the national tripartite bodies.

Following the implementation of the pilot project on minimum wages, concluded in 2023, the Agency is open to carrying out, where relevant and at the request of the Commission, other pilot projects and preparatory actions, as is indicated as one of Eurofound's tasks in its Founding Regulation.

In July 2023, Eurofound entered a service-level agreement with DG Employment on working time reduction and the project will come to an end in 2025.

The pilot project has the following modules:

1. A literature review of recent experiences of working time reductions.
2. A mapping exercise done by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents on recent policy initiatives in the EU Member States.
3. A set of 10–12 case studies.
4. Final report based on the elements listed above, communication materials (infographics, videos etc.), to be presented at an online closing event.

4.3 Strategy for relations with third countries and international organisations

Eurofound maintains close working relationships with international organisations such as the ILO and the OECD, allowing for a global perspective in the analysis of EU policy issues.

Eurofound is committed to continuing its work in candidate countries, building on the positive role of EU agencies in supporting the EU strategy for enlargement countries. In the context of the Instrument of Pre-Accession III, Eurofound and the European Commission's DG for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations signed a contribution agreement 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 until 2026, the agreement covers three main tasks: data collections, comparative analysis and knowledge exchange. Using data collected as part of Eurofound's own surveys, comparative analysis on specific and relevant topics will allow countries not only to compare themselves with others but also to monitor their own

developments in living and working conditions over time. Participation in seminar, network and expert meetings will facilitate knowledge exchange, while also becoming familiar with Eurofound's mandate and tripartite governance. Implementation is financed via earmarked funds and are included here for information purposes only. Resources are included in Annex XI: Plan for grant, contribution or service-level agreements.

When the opportunity arises, Eurofound will also express an interest in supporting other countries in the framework of the eastern and southern countries of the European Neighbourhood programme.

Resources dedicated to international relations are reduced and are included in the activities of the annual work programme. Some limited mission costs are covered in the ordinary budget line for missions of the Agency.

5. Human and financial resources outlook: Resource programming 2022-2026

5.1 Financial resources

In December 2020, the European Council adopted the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the period 2021–2027 which is still the main basis for the development of Eurofound's subsidy during the planning years. In principle, the MFF foresees a freeze in real terms (in 2018 prices) for all 'cruising speed' agencies, which is the category Eurofound belongs to.

However, the development of the Irish country coefficient applied to staff salaries to ensure parity of purchasing powers with EU staff in other countries led to an annual increase of €1,780,000 in 2022 compared to 2019. To compensate for this extraordinary change in the country coefficient (increase from 119.2 in 2019 to 136.9 in 2022) an additional subsidy amount of €650,000 was requested from 2023 on to at least mitigate this increase and its effect on the operational budget. Furthermore, the European Commission decided in May 2022 to cover the additional cost of Agencies due to inflation-driven salary increases from 2023 on; for Eurofound, this translates into a subsidy increase of €453,000 from 2023 on. The planned subsidy for 2024 is, therefore, €24,054,000 resulting in a total budget for 2024 of €24,260,000.

Since the subsidy increase will not fully cover the rising cost sparked by higher inflation expectations, particularly noticeable in massive increases of energy costs, Eurofound needs to implement substantial savings in all areas of its operations: technical and process improvements, higher synergies and cooperation with other organisations and innovations.

The planned title 3 (operational expenditure) level for 2024 is about €6.2 million. This is a considerable increase compared to the all-time low of 2022 (less than €5.5 million as per expected actuals) caused by high increases in title 1, which were not compensated by an increase of the subsidy and, therefore, had to be balanced by cuts in title 3. Having said that, the planned title 3 budget for 2024 is still significantly lower than 2010 when it was about €7.8 million. The modest subsidy increases planned in the MFF for 2025 and 2026 will only bring title 3 to about €6.3 million by the end of the planning period.

Following the relatively steep increases in title 1 (staff and staff-related costs) during the years 2019–2023 (mainly due to the increase of the Irish country coefficient and salaries in 2022), further rises are not reflected in the years ahead so that title 1 only grows by a relatively modest 2% between 2024 and 2026. Any further increases of the country coefficient above the level of 2022 would seriously threaten Eurofound’s ability to deliver on its mandate, since the operational budget would need, again, to shrink to a (long-term) unsustainable level.

The big cost increase in 2022 in title 2 is based on surging energy prices and the compensation for IT cost increases due to the further rise in requirements for digital solutions, including a heightened focus on prevention of cyber-related crime and attacks. It is assumed this cost increase will continue during the planning period. Also, it needs to be ensured that Eurofound can deliver on its sustainability programme, particularly the environmental sustainability, which will be required to achieve the aim of carbon neutrality in the future.

<i>in thousand EUR</i>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Budget	PD2023	PD2024	Forecast	Forecast
Revenue					
Subsidy	22051	23595	24054	24522	25000
Other revenue	219	218	206	198	200
Total	22270	23813	24260	24720	25200
Expenditure					
Title 1	14755	16053	16360	16660	17000
Title 2	1550	1660	1720	1840	1870
Title 3	5965	6100	6180	6220	6330
Total	22270	23813	24260	24720	25200

Details of the evolution of revenue and expenditure can be found in [Annex III](#) – Financial resources

5.2 Human Resources

The following table sets out the projected staff evolution up to 2026.

Staff population	Staff population planned for 2022	Staff population planned for 2023	Staff population planned for 2024	Staff population planned for 2025	Staff population planned for 2026
Total AD ¹⁰	51	51	51	51	51
Total AST ¹¹	40	40	40	40	40
Total CA ¹²	13	13	13	13	13
SNE ¹³	1	1	1	1	1
Structural service providers ¹⁴	7	7	7	7	7
TOTAL	112	112	112	112	112

Eurofound does not expect changes in overall staffing in the period 2022–2026. Details of the staff population and evolution are in Annex IV: Human resources quantitative.

The stable headcount is a reflection of the unchanged mandate and the continuation of most tasks.

5.3 Development of tasks and efficiency gains

While the revision of Eurofound's Founding Regulation (Regulation (EEC) No 1365/75) led to an update of its mandate, it did not include any substantial changes which would influence the resources requirements. This programming document does, therefore, not include any new tasks or growth in existing tasks.

The Agency might, however, be entrusted with tasks such as pilot projects or through contribution agreements which would need to be resourced beyond the figures here presented.

In the context of a, in principle, frozen budget in real terms for the next years, only increased by an amount to partly compensate the Irish country coefficient, efficiency gains are the only way to counter the likely effects of increased costs beyond inflation, for example ICT or utilities, the

¹⁰ Total administrators, officials and temporary agents.

¹¹ Total assistants, officials and temporary agents, including AST/SC.

¹² Contract agents, in FTE.

¹³ Seconded national expert (SNE).

¹⁴ 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 information technology. 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 PC and desk; 3) administratively followed by the Commission (badge, etc.) and 4) contributing to the value added of the Commission.

collection of reliable data. With more than 60% of its budget in the area of staff and staff-related costs (title 1), largely influenced by the EU Staff Regulation, the possibilities for efficiency gains are in the number of staff employed and, to a much smaller extent, in areas like missions, buildings and savings in the procurement of services. Following on from experiences gained during the pandemic, expenditure for missions, meetings and governance, as well as administrative overheads, is already cut back from previous levels in order to harness the operational core tasks despite significant cost increases, particularly in the area of data collection.

An important lever for efficiency gains could be the increase of services that are shared between different EU agencies or between an Agency and the Commission. Compared to several years ago the agencies have significantly professionalised their approach to the sharing of services: systematic screening of potential tasks to share, substantial increases in the number of shared procurement allowing for administrative savings and economies of scale, and regular monitoring and reporting of the progress achieved in this area.

Similarly, the amount of shared services and joint procurements with the Commission also increased consistently over the past few years. An example of this is the roll-out in Eurofound of the Commission's HR system, Sysper, which will be fully implemented during the period of this programming document.

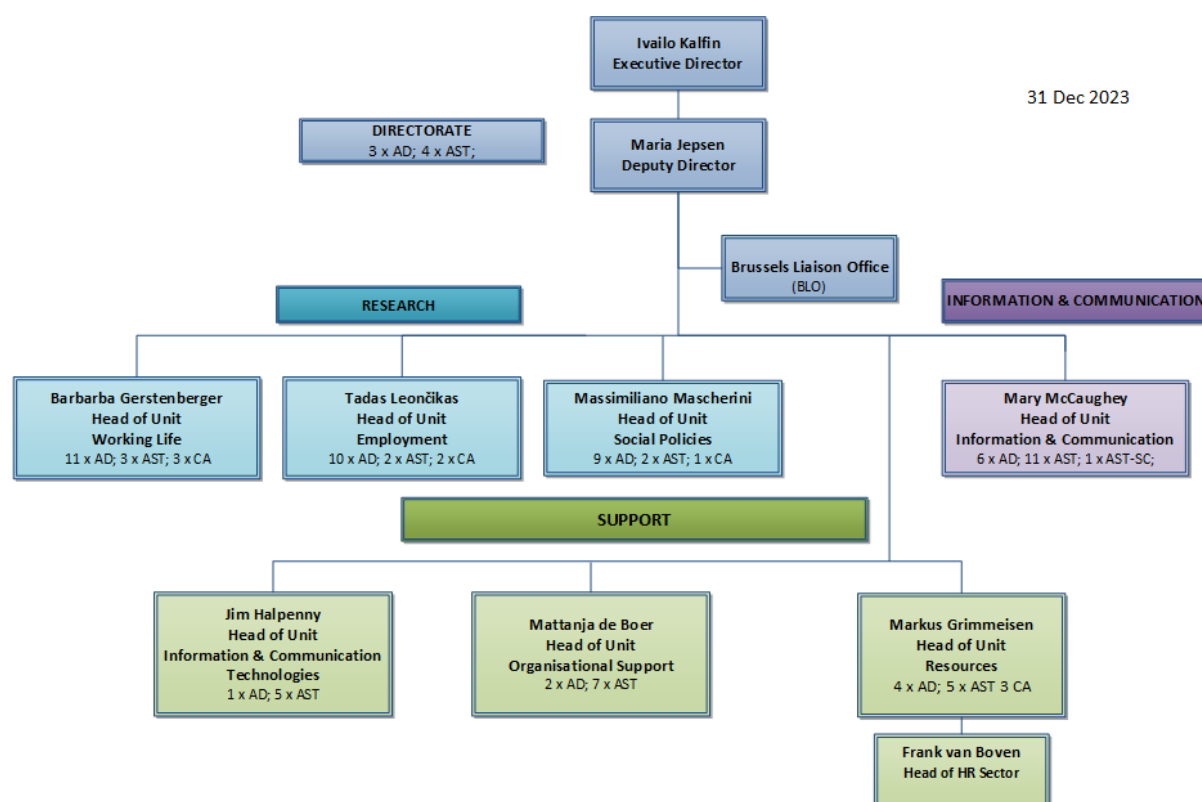
While these developments certainly resulted in a higher quality of goods and services procured, as well as economies of scale, the reduction in administrative burden and cost is much less obvious. The procedures for participating in joint procurements and in shared services give rise to coordination costs that limit any potential savings. This is even more the case if an agency leads a joint procurement or offers services to others. In the case of the Commission, this regularly leads to the request for very significant fixed annual charges, for example, for the use of Sysper or the possibility to participate in IT procurement tenders.

Next to the sharing of services and joint procurements, the delivery of more and better digital solutions to support the Agency is a key element to achieve efficiency gains. The digital-driven redesign of processes and projects to reduce the administrative burden will be another focus in years to come. This comes, however, at the cost of additional expenditure in the area of information and communication technology. On balance, this will nevertheless result in net efficiency gains for the Agency.

Finally, lessons learned during the prolonged working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 will allow for higher efficiency. Electronic signatures, increased numbers of online meetings, the digital communication of research findings and many other smaller measures will help both with overall cost savings and increased environmental sustainability.

Annex I: Organisation chart

Eurofound overview as of 31 December 2023



Note: AD: Administrator post; AST: Assistant post; CA: Contract agent post. The HR Sector (Head of Human Resources) is part of the Resources Unit (Head of Resources). The Brussels Liaison Office is part of and led by the Directorate.

Annex II: Resource allocation per activity

	2023			2024		
Activity	Operational cost Title 3 cost (EUR)	Staff time in FTE	Total cost (EUR)	Operational cost Title 3 (EUR)	Staff time in FTE	Total cost (EUR)
Working conditions and sustainable work	292,000	6.2	2,121,000	216,000	5.1	1,822,000
Industrial relations and social dialogue	1,322,000	7.9	3,645,000	1,293,000	8.1	3,814,000
Employment and labour markets	309,000	5.4	1,920,000	198,000	5.2	1,822,000
Living conditions and quality of life	238,000	3.5	1,267,000	278,000	4.2	1,581,000
Anticipating and managing the impact of change	248,000	4.0	1,420,000	324,000	4.9	1,876,000
Promoting social cohesion and convergence	189,000	4.9	1,642,000	201,000	4.2	1,488,000
Survey management and development	1,738,000	6.1	3,543,000	2,094,000	5.0	3,662,000
Ad hoc requests	330,000	2.2	985,000	325,000	1.7	849,000
Corporate communication infrastructure	1,219,000	16.5	5,883,000	985,000	16.4	5,632,000
Management and development	215,000	4.3	1,387,000	266,000	5.3	1,714,000
Grand Total	6,100,000	60.8	23,813,000	6,180,000¹⁵	60.1	24,260,000

¹⁵ An amount of EUR 5,390,500 has been established as the ‘global procurement envelope’ reserved for procurements funding operational activities, under Title 3 of the annual budget 2024, in line with Article 72 of Eurofound’s Financial Regulation. Article 72 provides that a budgetary commitment shall be preceded by a financing decision, except for administrative expenditure. It further stipulates that Eurofound’s multi-annual and annual work programmes in the Single Programme Document shall be the equivalent to the financing decision for the activities it covers. The amount does not include existing framework contracts in use for 2024. Cumulated changes to the global budgetary envelope of the financing decision not exceeding 20% shall not be considered substantial in accordance with Decision No. 24 of the Management Board on the delegation of power to make non-substantial amendments to the work programme, adopted on 4 May 2020.

Annex III: Financial resources

Table A1: Revenue

Total revenues

Revenues	2023 ¹⁶	2024
	Revenues estimated by the Agency	Budget forecast
EU contribution	23,595,000	24,054,000
Other revenue	804,770	206,000
Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service level agreement	970,161	pm
Total revenues	25,369,931	24,260,000

General revenues

Revenues	2023 ¹⁷	2024
	Revenues estimated by the Agency	Budget forecast
EU contribution	23,595,000	24,054,000
Other revenue	804,770	206,000
Total revenues	24,399,770	24,260,000

¹⁶ Aligned with the Amending Budget 2023 adopted by the Management Board on 22 December 2023.

¹⁷ As above.

Revenues	General revenues						
	Executed 2022	Estimated by the Agency 2023 ¹⁸	2024		VAR 2024 /2023 (%)	Envisaged 2025	Envisaged 2026
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
1. Revenue from fees and charges							
2. EU Contribution	22,051,380	23,595,000	24,054,000	24,054,000	1.9%	24,522,000	25,000,000
- of which assigned revenues deriving from previous years' surpluses		17,912	pm	pm	n/a	pm	pm
3. Third countries contribution (incl. EEA/EFTA and candidate countries)	-	pm	pm	pm		pm	pm
- Of which EEA/EFTA (excl. Switzerland)	-	pm	pm	pm		pm	pm
- Of which candidate countries	-	pm	pm	pm		pm	pm
4. Other contributions	-	pm	pm	pm		pm	pm
5. Administrative operations	-	12,704	10,000	10,000	-21.3 %	8,000	7,000
- Of which interest generated by funds paid by the Commission by way of the EU contribution (FFR Art. 58)	-	pm	pm	pm	0%	pm	pm
6. Revenues from services rendered against payment	297,696 ¹⁹	792,066 ²⁰	196,000 ²¹	196,000 ²²	-75.3%	190,000	193,000
7. Correction of budgetary imbalances							
Total	22,349,076	24,399,770	24,260,000	24,260,000	-0.6%	24,720,000	25,200,000

¹⁸ As above.

¹⁹ Includes contributions as assigned revenue for EUR 184,190 from Switzerland and Norway towards European Working Condition Survey.

²⁰ Includes funding from Member States and third countries towards European Working Conditions Survey, revenue arising from shared accountancy services rendered to the European Labour Authority (ELA), and Norway's contribution towards Eurofound's Network of Correspondents.

²¹ See above.

²² See above.

Additional EU funding: Grants, contribution and service-level agreements

Revenues	2023	2024
	Revenues estimated by the Agency	Budget forecast
Total revenues	970,161	100,000

Revenues	Additional EU funding: Grants, contribution and service-level agreements						
	Executed 2022	Estimated by the Agency 2023	2024 ²³		VAR 2024 /2023 (%)	Envisaged 2025 ²⁴	Envisaged 2026 ²⁵
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Additional EU funding stemming from grants (FRR Art.7)		35,161 ²⁶			n/a	-	-
Additional EU funding stemming from contribution agreements (FFR Art.7)		810,000 ²⁷			n/a		90,000 ²⁸
Additional EU funding stemming from service level agreements (FFR Art. 43.2)		125,000 ²⁹	100,000 ³⁰	100,000 ³¹	-20 %	25,000 ³²	
Total		970,161	100,000	100,000	-90 %	25,000	90,000

²³ Figures for 2024 are for information only; they are not yet included in the budget.

²⁴ As above.

²⁵ As above.

²⁶ The final payment for the grant contract with DG NEAR under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II).

²⁷ The new contribution agreement with DG NEAR under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III), 90% prefinancing. See also Annex XI.

²⁸ The balance for the new contribution agreement with DG NEAR under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III), (10%).

²⁹ Service Level Agreement with DG EMPL for the pilot project on working time reduction, first instalment (50%).

³⁰ The same as above, second instalment (40 %).

³¹ The same as above, second instalment (40 %).

³² The same as above, final instalment (10 %).

Table A2: Expenditure

Expenditure	2023 ³³		2024	
	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations	Commitment appropriations	Payment appropriations
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	16,217,089	16,217,089	16,360,000	16,360,000
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	1,893,345	1,893,345	1,720,000	1,720,000
Title 3 - Operational expenditure	7,259,497	7,259,497	6,180,000	6,180,000
Total expenditure	25,369,931³⁴	25,369,931³⁵	24,260,000	24,260,000

Expenditure	Commitment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2022 ³⁶	Budget 2023 ³⁷	Draft Budget 2024		VAR 2024 /2023 (%)	Envisaged 2025	Envisaged 2026
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 – Staff expenditure	15,379,798	16,217,089³⁸	16,360,000	16,360,000	0.9%	16,660,000	17,000,000
Salaries & allowances	14,640,804	15,212,978	15,359,000	15,359,000	1.0 %	15,612,000	15,929,000
- Of which are establishment plan posts	14,035,294	14,776,297	14,899,000	14,899,000	0.8 %	15,145,000	15,455,000
- Of which are external personnel	605,509	436,681	460,000	460,000	5.3 %	467,000	474,000
Expenditure relating to staff recruitment	85,280	119,989	129,000	129,000	7.5 %	131,000	133,000

³³ Aligned with the Amending Budget 2023, adopted by the Management Board on 22 December 2023.

³⁴ The total expenditure appropriations include EUR 1,563,353 arising from ‘external assigned revenue’ and additional EU funding.

³⁵ As above.

³⁶ Includes all payments made from C1, C4 and R0 appropriations in 2022.

³⁷ Aligned with the Amending Budget 2023, adopted by the Management Board on 22 December 2023.

³⁸ In Title 1, expenditure of EUR 16,367 arose from additional EU funding (‘assigned revenue’).

Employer's pension contributions							
Mission expenses	52,444	113,129	125,000	125,000	10.5%	150,000	152,000
Socio-medical infrastructure	117,450	149,483	183,000	183,000	22.4 %	185,000	190,000
Training	96,029	107,902	120,000	120,000	11.2 %	120,000	122,000
External Services	387,791	513,608	444,000	444,000	-13.6 %	462,000	474,000
Receptions, events and representation							
Social welfare							
Other staff-related expenditure							
Title 2 – Infrastructure and operating expenditure	1,654,410	1,893,345	1,720,000	1,720,000	-9.2 %	1,840,000	1,870,000
Rental of buildings and associated costs	634,542	720,234	731,000	731,000	1.5 %	776,000	798,000
Information and communication, technology and data processing	910,000	986,782	840,000	840,000	-14.9 %	915,000	923,000
Movable property and associated costs	67,264	143,443	103,000	103,000	-28.2 %	103,000	103,000
Current administrative expenditure	16,000	19,386	20,000	20,000	3.2 %	20,000	20,000
Postage and telecommunications	26,604	23,500	26,000	26,000	10.6 %	26,000	26,000
Meeting expenses							
Running costs in connection with operational activities							
Information and publishing							
Studies							

Other infrastructure and operating expenditure							
Title 3 – Operational expenditure	5,988,392	7,259,497 39	6,180,000	6,180,000	-14.9 %	6,220,000	6,330,000
Meetings	223,031	262,642	386,000	386,000	-47.0 %	433,000	
Evaluations	60,924	59,759	100,000	100,000	67.3 %	110,000	
Translation expenses	229,970	385,577	378,000	378,000	-2.0 %	330,000	
Studies and consultants	4,669,411	5,412,734	4,478,000	4,478,000	-17.3 %	4,402,000	
Information and publications	805,056	1,138,785	838,000	838,000	-26.4 %	945,000	
Other							
Total	23,022,600	25,369,931 40	24,260,000	24,260,000	-4.4%	24,720,000	25,200,000

Expenditure	Payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2022 ⁴¹	Budget 2023 ⁴²	Draft Budget 2024		VAR 2024 /2023 (%)	Envisaged 2025	Envisaged 2026
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	15,240,652	16,217,089 43	16,360,000	16,360,000	0.9 %	16,660,000	17,000,000
Salaries & allowances	14,640,804	15,212,978	15,359,000	15,359,000	1.0 %	15,612,000	15,929,000
- <i>Of which are establishment plan posts</i>	14,035,294	14,776,297	14,899,000	14,899,000	0.8 %	15,145,000	15,455,000
- <i>Of which are external personnel</i>	605,509	436,681	460,000	460,000	5.3 %	467,000	474,000
Expenditure relating to staff recruitment	84,880	119,989	129,00	129,000	7.5 %	131,000	133,000

³⁹ In Title 3, expenditure of EUR 1,546,986 originates from additional EU funding and contributions from Member States and third countries towards the European Working Conditions Survey ('Assigned revenue').

⁴⁰ The total expenditure appropriations include EUR 1,563,353 from 'external assigned revenue' and additional EU funding.

⁴¹ Includes all payments made from C1, C4 and R0 appropriations in 2022.

⁴² Aligned with the Amending Budget 2023, adopted by the Management Board on 22 December 2023.

⁴³ In Title 1, expenditure of EUR 16,367 arose from additional EU funding ('assigned revenue').

Employer's pension contributions							
Mission expenses	46,431	113,129	125,000	125,000	10.5 %	150,000	152,000
Socio-medical infrastructure	85,897	149,483	183,000	183,000	22.4 %	185,000	190,000
Training	61,555	107,902	120,000	120,000	11.2 %	120,000	122,000
External Services	321,086	513,608	444,000	444,000	-13.6 %	462,000	474,000
Receptions, events and representation							
Social welfare							
Other Staff related expenditure							
Title 2 – Infrastructure and operating expenditure	1,326,703	1,893,345	1,720,000	1,720,000	-9.2 %	1,840,000	1,870,000
Rental of buildings and associated costs	463,863	720,234	731,000	731,000	1.5 %	776,000	798,000
Information and communications, technology and data processing	777,603	986,782	840,000	840,000	-14.9 %	915,000	923,000
Movable property and associated costs	44,046	143,443	103,000	103,000	-28.2 %	103,000	103,000
Current administrative expenditure	15,307	19,386	20,000	20,000	3.2%	20,000	20,000
Postage / Telecommunications	25,885	23,500	26,000	26,000	10.6%	26,000	26,000
Meeting expenses							
Running costs in connection with operational activities							
Information and publishing							
Studies							

Other infrastructure and operating expenditure							
Title 3 – Operational expenditure	1,708,839	7,259,497 ⁴⁴	6,180,000	6,180,000	-14.9 %	6,220,000	6,330,000
Meetings	165,152	262,642	386,000	386,000	-47 %	433,000	
Evaluations	18,779	59,759	100,000	100,000	67.3 %	110,000	
Translation expenses	160,103	385,577	378,000	378,000	-2.0 %	330,000	
Studies and consultants	829,411	5,412,734	4,478,000	4,478,000	-17.3 %	4,402,000	
Information and publication	535,394	1,138,785	838,000	838,000	-26.4 %	945,000	
Other							
Total	18,276,194	25,369,931 ⁴⁵	24,260,000	24,260,000	-4.4%	24,720,000	25,200,000

⁴⁴In Title 3, expenditure of EUR 1,546,986 originates from additional EU funding and contributions from Member States and Third countries towards European Working Conditions Survey ('Assigned revenue').

⁴⁵ The total expenditure appropriations include EUR 1,563,353 from 'external assigned revenue' and additional EU funding.

Table A3: Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations 2020–2022

Budget outturn	2020	2021	2022
Revenue actually received (+)	21,702,380	22,688,360	22,349,076
Payments made (-)	17,505,223	-18,887,562	-18,281,159
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	5,048,887	-4,700,465	-5,284,381
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	143,234	81,233	102,528
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	1 317, 618	836,351	1,127,975
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	-63	-5	-11
Balance of the outturn account for the financial year out			
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)	-335,489		
Total	273,570	17,912	14,028

Descriptive information and justification on:

- **budget outturn**

The budget utilisation rate measured as commitments against general C1 appropriations was 100.0 % in 2022.

The balance of the outturn account for the financial year 2022 shows a positive balance of EUR 14,028. This amount arises from cancellation of carry-overs from 2021.

- **cancellation of commitment appropriations**

In 2022, EUR 436 (0.002%) of general C1 appropriations were cancelled as non-consumed

- **cancellation of payment appropriations for the year and payment appropriations carried over**

Cancelled carry-over appropriations amounted to EUR 102,528 or 2.9 % of all C8 commitments carried over from 2021 to 2022.

Most of the cancelled appropriations relate to work/services contracted or orders which were not completely delivered by contractors/suppliers or the quality was not satisfactory.

Annex IV: Human resources quantitative

A. Statutory staff and seconded national experts

Table A4: Staff population and its evolution: Overview of all categories of staff

Staff	2022			2023	2024	2025	2026
Establishment plan posts	Authorised Budget	Actually filled as of 31/12/2022	Occupancy rate %	Authorised staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff
Administrators (AD)	51	46	90.2	51	51	51	51
Assistants (AST)	39	38	97.4	38	39	39	39
Assistants/ Secretaries (AST/SC)	1	0	0	2	1	1	1
Total establishment plan posts	91	84	92.3	91	91	91	91
External staff	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2021	Execution Rate %	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	13	10	84.6	13	13	13	13
Seconded national experts (SNE)	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total external staff	14	10	71.4	14	14	14	14
Total staff	105	94	89.5	105	105	105	105

B. Additional external staff expected to be financed from grants, contributions or service-level agreements

Human Resources	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE	Envisaged FTE
Contract Agents (CA)	2	1	1	0
Seconded national experts (SNE)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2	1	1	0

C. Other Human Resources

Structural service providers⁴⁶

	Actually in place as of 31/12/2022
Security	2
IT	0
Other (specify)	
Canteen staff	2
Other (specify)	
Receptionist	1

Interim workers

	Total FTEs in 2022
Number	6

⁴⁶ Service providers are contracted by a private company and carry out specialised outsourced tasks of a horizontal/support nature. At the Commission, following general criteria should be fulfilled: 1) no individual contract with the Commission 2) on the Commission premises, usually with a PC and desk 3) administratively followed by the Commission (badge, etc) and 4) contributing to the added value of the Commission.

Table A5: Multiannual staff policy plan 2023–2025

Function group and grade	2022				2023		2024		2025		2026	
	Authorised budget		Actually filled as of 31/12/2022		Authorised budget		Envisaged		Envisaged		Envisaged	
	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AD 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AD 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
AD 14	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1
AD 13	2	3	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4
AD 12	1	8	0	4	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	4
AD 11	0	5	0	2	1	4	1	4	1	2	2	4
AD 10	0	6	1	3	0	5	1	5	1	5	0	5
AD 9	1	6	1	8	1	7	0	8	0	9	0	9
AD 8	0	8	0	8	0	8	0	7	0	8	0	8
AD 7	0	6	0	5	0	7	0	7	0	8	0	4
AD 6	0	2	0	4	0	3	0	3	0	4	0	5
AD 5	0	1	0	5	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
AD TOTAL	4	47	4	42	4	47	4	47	4	47	4	47
AST 11	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
AST 10	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	2
AST 9	2	7	0	6	2	7	2	8	2	8	3	6
AST 8	1	8	1	2	1	9	2	6	1	4	0	3
AST 7	2	5	2	7	2	5	1	5	1	7	1	9
AST 6	0	2	1	5	0	2	0	3	0	4	0	6
AST 5	0	5	0	6	0	6	0	6	0	4	0	2
AST 4	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	4

AST 3	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2
AST 2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AST 1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AST TOTAL	5	34	5	33	5	33	5	34	5	34	5	34
AST/SC 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AST/SC 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AST/SC 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
AST/SC 3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
AST/SC 2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
AST/SC 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AST/SC Total	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	9	82	9	75	9	82	9	82	9	82	9	82
Grand total	91		84		91		91		91		91	

External personnel
Contract Agents

Contract agents	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2022	Executed FTE as of 31 December 2022	Headcount as of 31 December 2022	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2023	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2024	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2025	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2026
Function Group IV	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Function Group III	2	1	1	2	2	2	4
Function Group II	4	2	2	4	4	4	2
Function Group I	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	10	10	13	13	13	13

Seconded National Experts

Seconded national experts	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2022	Executed FTE as of 31/12/2022	Headcount as of 31/12/2022	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2023	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2024	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2025	FTE corresponding to the authorised budget 2026
Total	1	0	0	1	1	1	1

Table A6: Recruitment forecasts 2023 following retirement/mobility or new requested posts (information on the entry level for each type of posts: indicative table)

Job title in the Agency	Type of contract (Official, TA or CA)		TA/Official		CA
			Function group/grade of internal recruitment and single grade of external recruitment foreseen for publication		Recruitment Function Group (I, II, III and IV)
	Due to foreseen retirement/ mobility	New post requested due to additional tasks	Internal	External	
Internal Control Officer	N	Y	n/a	AD6	
Digital Transformation Manager	N	Y	n/a	AD8	
Head of Procurement Sector	N	Y	n/a	AD8	
Digital Communication Officer	N	Y			FGIII

Number of inter-agency mobility to and from Eurofound 2023: 1 Contract Agent FGIV from Eurofound to EEA.

Annex V: Human resources qualitative

A. Recruitment policy

Officials

The officials serving in Eurofound are largely as a result of the 'titularisation' exercise undertaken in 2007. The competition was open to all serving temporary agent staff, regardless of position. The result of that procedure is that staff across the Agency hold the status of official in a personal capacity without regard to their function. The options used for recruitment of officials are:

- inter-institutional transfer
- internal competition (Article 29(d) of the Staff Regulations)
- European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) reserve lists for officials, using the electronic reserve list (ERL) database
- open competition organised by EPSO
- temporary agents recruited under Article 2(b)

Due to difficulties in attracting, recruiting and retaining the right candidates (especially in research), the decision on how to fill official vacancies is to be taken on a case-by-case basis. Eurofound is conscious of the principle in Article 29 that the vast majority of officials are to be recruited on the basis of open competitions. Therefore, future policy on filling official posts includes a mix of options allowing Eurofound to manage the process in the most efficient and effective manner. The policy aims to allow Eurofound to fill vacant posts in a timely manner and promote the career development possibilities of current staff members.

Inter-institutional transfers for officials are advertised on the Eurofound, EPSO and Commission websites. They are also circulated to all agencies. Internal competitions may be organised on the basis of Article 29(d) of the Staff Regulations. A vacancy notice, outlining the job specification, the necessary competencies and the selection process is published internally in the Agency and serving officials and temporary agents are invited to apply.

Temporary agents

The great majority of staff in the agency are temporary agents, 2(f). They are deployed for all roles, both managerial and operational, except those roles that are filled with contract agents. In addition, there are two Temporary Agent 2(a) posts, which are filled by the Executive Director and Deputy Director.

All newly recruited staff will be offered a fixed-term contract, with for temporary agents 2(f) the possibility of an indefinite contract on first renewal. Fixed-term contracts are for a duration of five years, unless, exceptionally, the nature of the role to be filled or the skills required is for a shorter

duration. The contract of a temporary agent 2(a) can be renewed once for a duration of another five years.

Where it is not possible to fill an official post with an official, the option of appointing a temporary agent under Article 2(b) of the CEOS is exercised. The contract duration is for up to four years in such cases, with the option of renewal for a maximum of a further two years.

The entry grades are in accordance with the requirement of the Staff Regulations and with the model decision for the agencies. For the most junior administrative assistant role (for example, secretary or finance assistant, the entry level was AST 1 and AST/SC2). Eurofound has difficulties in allocating AST/SC positions in the organisation due to the absence of pure secretarial/administrative roles. Because of the size of the organisation, secretarial/administrative tasks are almost always combined with more complex assistant tasks and therefore require an AST position.

For more complex administrative assistant roles (for example, HR generalist, editor or personal assistant), the entry level is AST 3 or AST 4. Almost all AD staff are recruited at AD 5, AD 6 or AD 7 levels. Eurofound is recruiting social researchers in the beginning of their career at AD5 and AD6 level. Researchers with extensive experience in managing research projects and programmes are recruited at AD7. The determining factor in deciding on the appropriate entry point is the level of experience that the candidate needs in order to assume the responsibilities of the role. For instance, in the area of research, Research Managers recruited at AD 7 are normally more mature candidates, with a significant level of experience and expertise and are expected to assume a project managerial role immediately. Research Officers, on the other hand, who are recruited at AD 5, will generally be less experienced and are assigned to carry out work of a more technical/scientific nature initially, for example conducting research rather than managing it. In this role, the Research Officer develops the skills of a Research Manager over time and by the time of promotion to AD 7 will be expected to assume all aspects of the role of Research Manager.

Contract agents

Contract agents are engaged by Eurofound to carry out different roles. Roles for which contract agents have been engaged are: Project Officer – HR; Project Officer – Research; Events Assistant; Contracts Assistant; Project Officer – Data Protection and Internal Control; Receptionist; Facilities Assistant; and Operations Assistant. In deciding on the posts to be filled by contract agents, the following factors are considered.

- There is no post available in the approved staffing table to source a suitable candidate and there is a work overload problem, perhaps long term.
- There is a short- or medium-term project where the appointment of a permanent resource is not justified.
- To fill a post on a short-term basis, due to extended illness or, exceptionally, maternity leave.
- A post is being created on a pilot basis and a contract agent is employed until the success of the new post can be assessed in due course.

Eurofound offers contracts of up to five years in duration. These contracts may be renewed if there is a need for the role to be continued and subject to budgetary constraints. On second renewal, a contract would become indefinite.⁴⁷

Some contract agents have been offered contracts of shorter duration, depending, for example, on the envisaged duration of the project in the case of core activities, the estimated time for which an additional resource is required, or the time that it will take to fill a temporary agent vacancy.

There are two options available when recruiting contract agents on short- or medium-term employment. The first is to source candidates from the EPSO CAST Permanent database. The second option of recruiting through a selection procedure organised by the Agency is invariably the more effective solution.

CAST Permanent is a new contract agent selection procedure for a number of profiles comprising Function Groups II, III & IV which has been developed by EPSO.

Structural service providers

In Eurofound, there are three categories of resources falling within this heading.

Interim staff

Such staff are provided to meet shorter-term staffing needs, arising from inability to fill a vacancy immediately or to carry out work when the role holder is on long-term sick leave.

They have been engaged to carry out a range of functions:

- General Facilities Assistant/Officer
- Web Content Officer
- HR Assistant
- Finance/Procurement Assistant/Officer
- Research Officer
- ICT Helpdesk Assistant

Contracts for interim staff usually range between 2 and 11 months. In exceptional cases, interim staff may be engaged for a longer period, where they have key skills and the life of a project may exceed 11 months.

They are supplied by a recruitment agency with which Eurofound has a four-year framework contract, following an open tendering procedure. Their employment contracts are with the recruitment agency and not with Eurofound.

ICT contractors

They provide consultancy services and additional technical support to the staff of the ICT unit. This support relates to ICT projects for which specific technical expertise is not available internally within the ICT unit.

⁴⁷ In the case of FG IV staff, subject to confirmation that they have achieved a level of B2 in a third language.

They are provided under the terms of a framework contract, awarded following an open tendering procedure carried out by Eurofound. Framework contracts have a duration of between one and four years. Their services are provided as required and relate to specific ICT projects approved in the annual Strategic ICT Plan. Support may also be provided during very busy periods or to cover for the absence of key ICT technical personnel (such as network administrator).

Service contractors

A number of contract staff are working intra-muros in the context of framework contracts for the supply of catering, cleaning and security services.

Appointment of Heads of Unit

To ensure the appointment of candidates of the highest calibre and competence to Head of Unit (middle management) positions, Eurofound adopted the Model decision on Middle Management Staff in 2018. Eurofound will invite one manager of another Agency (at least in the same grade as that of the function to be filled) to participate in the pre-selection procedure. Short-listed candidates shall take part in an assessment centre to evaluate the candidate's managerial skills.

Mobility within the Agency

All vacancies are advertised internally, where practical and appropriate. Interested candidates are interviewed and if considered suitable are transferred internally. If there is no suitable candidate, a selection procedure or competition is launched. The first stage is an internal selection/competition, and if internal candidates are successful, they are appointed to the position.

A job rotation scheme also exists. It is not frequently availed of, but it allows staff members to swap jobs with each other. The ultimate decision to facilitate the swap is contingent on the suitability of each candidate for the roles.

Redeployment

Decisions regarding the choice of posts to be suppressed are, if needed, based on strategic and organisational criteria to ensure that the best interests of the agency are not compromised and that the objectives of the programming document can be met. These criteria should assess whether the post is key to the functioning of Eurofound and should, therefore, include the following considerations:

- Is the post becoming vacant (transfer, end of contract, retirement or resignation) still as relevant as it was when originally created?
- Has technology or more efficient procedures/structures created any redundancies in the roles?
- Is the post assigned to a core activity?
- Is the activity appropriately resourced or over-resourced? Could it be carried out with fewer resources or by restructuring other roles? Is there duplication between the role and what others are doing? Can the work be delegated to other staff?
- Can the activity/task be outsourced, or simply discontinued?
- Are skills critical – can they be found among existing staff or must they be recruited?

- What would be the impact of not filling the post – for the Unit, for Eurofound?
- Should staff reductions be used to rebalance in favour of AD and have fewer AST staff, or vice versa?

Implementing rules in place:

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Engagement of CA	Model Decision C(2019)3016	X		
Engagement of TA	Model Decision C(2015)1509	X		
Middle management	Model decision C(2018)2542	X		
Type of posts	Model Decision C(2018)8800	X		

B. Appraisal and reclassification/promotions

Eurofound has an annual appraisal and development cycle (HRDP). After closing the HRDP exercise, the promotion and reclassification exercise is launched.

Implementing rules in place

		Yes	No	If no, which other implementing rules are in place
Reclassification of TA	Model Decision C(2015)9560	X		
Reclassification of CA	Model Decision C(2015)9561	X		

Table A7: Reclassification of TA/promotion of official

	Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff						
Grades	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (according to decision C(2015)9563)
AD05		3			2.7	2.8	2.8
AD06	4.5	5	3		3	3.9	2.8
AD07	4.2	3.2	2.8	3.3	2.9	3.3	2.8
AD08	2.8	2.7	5	3	3	3.3	3
AD09	4		4	3.5	3.8	3.8	4
AD10	4.5				4	4.2	4
AD11	12				6.2	9.1	4
AD12		8.5		8.2		8.3	6.7
AD13							6.7
AST1	3.7				11.1	7.4	3
AST2	4.3		3		3.2	3.5	3
AST3		3		3.5	2.8	3.1	3
AST4	3	6.5	3	2.3		3.7	3
AST5	4.8	5	4.2		4	4.5	4
AST6	6	4	3		4.2	4.3	4
AST7	6	5.5	3.5		3.3	4.6	4
AST8	4.3				4	4.2	4
AST9							N/A
AST10 (Senior assistant)		7.5				7.5	5

Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff							
Grades	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (according to Decision C(2015)9563)
AST/SC1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4
AST/SC2	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5
AST/SC3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.9
AST/SC4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.7
AST/SC5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.3

Table A8: Reclassification of contract staff

Function Group	Grade	Staff in activity on 1 January 2021	How many staff members were reclassified in 2022	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members according to Decision C(2015)9561
CA IV	17				Between 6 and 10 years
	16	1	0		Between 5 and 7 years
	15				Between 4 and 6 years
	14	4	1	3	Between 3 and 5 years
	13				Between 3 and 5 years
CA III	11				Between 6 and 10 years
	10	2	0		Between 5 and 7 years
	9				Between 4 and 6 years
	8	1	0		Between 3 and 5 years
CA II	6	1	0		Between 6 and 10 years
	5	2	0		Between 5 and 7 years
	4				Between 3 and 5 years
CA I	2				Between 6 and 10 years
	1				Between 3 and 5 years

C. Gender representation

There is a fairly balanced gender distribution. This is applicable to the distribution of staff in general and also for staff in managerial roles.

Table A9: Statutory staff (only officials, TA and CA) on 31 December 2022

		Official		Temporary		Contract Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator level	3	3.2	19	20.1	4	4.2	26	27.6
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)	4	4.2	21	22.2	3	3.2	28	29.7
	Total	7	7.4	40	42	7	7.4	55	58.3
Male	Administrator level	1	1	23	24.3	2	2.1	26	27.5
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)	1	1	12	12.7	1	1	14	14.8
	Total	2	2.1	35	37.1	3	3.2	40	42.4
Grand Total		9	9.5	75	79.5	10	10.6	94	100

Table A10: Gender evolution over five years of middle and senior management⁴⁸

	2018		2022	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female managers	5	45	4	44
Male managers	6	55	5	56

Only middle and senior managers are considered in this table. Head of Sectors are not accounted for as they do not fall in these categories. These figures are aligned with the Organisation chart in Annex I.

⁴⁸ Staff who are defined as middle manager by the applicable general implementing provisions on middle management.

D. Geographical Balance

There is a fairly balanced nationality distribution. It is notable that few candidates from Member States such as Cyprus, Estonia, Malta and Slovenia apply for positions in Eurofound. The relatively high number of Irish staff is due mainly to historical reasons and may re-balance with time, although for geographical reasons, it will continue to be higher than other nationalities.

Table A11: Geographical balance of statutory staff only (officials, TA and CA) on 31 December 2022

	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC- AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of total staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of total staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
Belgium	1	1.9	4	9.2	5	5.3
Bulgaria	1	1.9	1	2.3	2	2.1
Denmark	1	1.9	0	0	1	1
Germany	5	9.8	1	2.3	6	6.3
Ireland	7	13.7	21	48.3	28	29.6
Greece	1	1.9	0	0	1	1
Spain	6	11.7	5	11.5	11	11.6
France	3	5.8	4	9.2	7	7.4
Italy	5	9.8	3	6.9	8	8.4
Lithuania	2	3.9	0	0	2	2.1
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	2	3.9	0	0	2	2.1
Netherlands	5	9.8	0	0	5	5.3
Austria	2	3.9	0	0	2	2.1
Poland	1	1.9	2	4.6	3	3.1
Portugal	2	3.9	0	0	2	2.1
Romania	3	5.8	0	0	3	3.1

Slovakia	1	1.9	1	2.3	2	2.1
Finland	2	3.9	0	0	2	2.1
Sweden	1	1.9	1	2.3	2	2.1
United Kingdom	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	51	100	43	100	94	100

Table A12: Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency

Most represented nationality	2018		2022	
	Number	%	Number	%
Ireland	27	27	28	29.6

E. Schooling

There is one European School, Type II, providing education up to level 5, based in Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath. The school was primarily established for children of staff of the Food and Veterinary Office, a directorate of the Commission, in Grange, Co. Meath. However, it does not offer the European Baccalaureate degree and is also for logistical reasons not a viable option for Eurofound staff. No child of Eurofound staff is currently attending the school.

Eurofound has discussed the schooling question with the Irish authorities, particularly in the context of the Irish Government's commitment in the Seat Agreement to be open to providing for the education of the children of Eurofound staff on a similar basis to what is provided for EU staff located elsewhere. Following these consultations, Eurofound staff were surveyed on their preferences. There was a strong preference for maintaining the level of choice that is currently available to them and continuing with payment of the double education allowance in respect of children attending second level education. On the basis of this feedback, Eurofound will not pursue the matter of an Accredited European School for the time being.

Eurofound together with the Commission's office and the Parliament's office in Ireland have established an arrangement for many years with a private school, St Andrew's College, Blackrock, which operates at both primary and secondary level. In its 'European Annex' the school provides additional tuition in children's mother tongues to the children of Eurofound staff, funded wholly by the Irish Government. It also prepares children for and allows them to sit the exams to get the International Baccalaureate (IB). This school is used by many of Eurofound's staff. In its admission policy, the school grants a certain level of priority to children of Eurofound staff. However, depending on general demand, the priority given to Eurofound children might not in every case secure a place in the school. This is particularly critical for newly recruited staff members' children who arrive in Ireland with little lead time and, possibly, during the academic year. Eurofound has

established a regular dialogue with the school in order to inform them about staff developments and to create an understanding for the particular needs of Eurofound staff and their children.

Agreement in place with the European School(s)				
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type I European schools	Yes		No	X
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type II European schools	Yes		No	X
Number of service contracts in place with international schools:	0			
Description of any other solutions or actions in place: Issuing school allowance as per SR/CEOS				

Annex VI: Environment management

Public administrations have the responsibility to reduce the impact of their administrative operations on the environment as much as possible. In its special report (14/2014) *How do the EU institutions and bodies calculate, reduce and offset their greenhouse gas emissions?* the European Court of Auditors concludes with a recommendation of full implementation of the European Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and green procurement by all EU Institutions and bodies.

Eurofound considers environmental sustainability as one element towards greater corporate sustainability within the context of the UN's sustainability development goals (SDGs). While in the past considerable efforts were put into individual improvement actions (such as upgrading of the lighting system and the introduction of high efficiency natural gas boilers, increased window insulation, a state-of-the art video conferencing system, to reduce the number of missions, the reduction of paper consumption, the instalment of charging points for electrical cars and many more) no long-term strategy was implemented.

Since 2020, concrete steps were taken that have ensured a successful EMAS certification audit in November 2022 and Eurofound was issued an EMAS registration certificate in April 2023.

The biggest obstacle to faster progress in this area are the scarce human and financial resources available to Eurofound. Each year only few (relatively small) projects can be implemented in the area of environmental management in order not to jeopardise the justified expectations of stakeholders in relation to Eurofound delivering on its actual mandate as per its Founding Regulation. It has been, therefore, proposed that the Budgetary Authority (the EU Parliament and Council) to make available a specific budget that would allow agencies like Eurofound to apply for grants that are not available from national authorities to accelerate the efforts for better environmental sustainability of their operations. With this, the EU Institutions and Agencies should set an example for a European Green Deal.

Public procurement is an important instrument towards sustainability and the transition to a circular economy. In 2020, Eurofound adapted its procurement strategy to chart how to best integrate sustainability into existing procurement practices and systems. It will build on and use the handbook, toolkit and criteria for social and green public procurement available from the European Commission. Since March 2021, Eurofound is a part of an inter-institutional Green Public Procurement Helpdesk (GPP) contract. The Helpdesk provides professional advice on purchases of environmentally friendly products or services, which will be helpful in implementing the 2024 procurements.

Collaboration within the appropriate networks of the EU Agencies will be an important support.

Annex VII: Building Policy

Current buildings

Information to be provided per building	Name, location and type of building	Other comments
	Dublin: Main building and conference centre	
Surface area (in square metres) – of which is office space – of which is non-office space	Approx. 2,500 sq. m. 2,000 sq. m. 500 sq. m., conference centre	
Annual rent (in €)	n/a	
Type and duration of rental contract	n/a	
Host country grant or support	n/a	
Present value of the building	EUR 689,161	As of 31 December 2022

Information to be provided per building	Name, location and type of building	Other comments
	Dublin: Loughlinstown House and grounds (historical, listed building)	
Surface area (in square metres) – of which is office space – of which is non-office space	Approx. 500 sq. m. 350 sq. m. 150 sq. m. meeting rooms	
Annual rent (in €)	None; €250,000 was paid in 2000 for a 99-year lease (from 2001 on)	
Type and duration of rental contract	99-year lease	
Host country grant or support	n/a	
Present value of the building	n/a	

Information to be provided per building	Name, location and type of building	Other comments
	Brussels: 18, Avenue d'Auderghem	Brussels Liaison Office
Surface area (in square metres) – of which is office space – of which is non-office space	100 sq. m.	
Annual rent (in €)	24,514	in 2022
Type and duration of rental contract	Lease agreement with annual termination clause	
Host country grant or support	n/a	
Present value of the building	n/a	

Building projects in the planning phase

No new buildings or significant building extensions planned; no change of surface area planned or expected.

Building projects submitted to the European Parliament and the Council

Eurofound does not plan any building projects likely to have significant financial implications that will be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council. Nor are there building projects submitted previously in accordance with Article 206 of the 2018 Financial Regulation.

Annex VIII: Privileges and immunities

Agency privileges	Privileges granted to staff	
	Protocol on privileges and immunities/diplomatic status	Education/day care
<p>The Agency has diplomatic status.</p> <p>In common with other EU institutions, Eurofound is exempt from VAT.</p> <p>Eurofound meets the full cost of office furniture, security and infrastructure.</p> <p>There is no contribution by ministries or national, regional or local authorities.</p>	<p>No staff member has diplomatic status, but senior staff are entitled to a laissez-passer document to facilitate travel; however, this privilege is currently not availed of.</p> <p>The Protocol on privileges and immunities is applicable to all staff recruited under the Staff Regulations. This entitles them and their families to enter Ireland without being subject to the usual immigration procedures, for staff to travel to and from work without hindrance, for staff to transfer residence to Ireland without payment of import duty on their effects and motor cars.</p> <p>Staff are exempt from national income tax on their earning on the basis that they are liable to a tax for the benefit of the Communities on salaries, wages and emoluments paid to them by the Communities.</p> <p>There are no continuous VAT exemptions for staff, with the exception of the Executive Director.</p> <p>Staff recruited from outside Ireland may purchase up to two cars without payment of tax or import charges. They may also purchase household goods free of VAT during the first 24 months after moving to Ireland.</p>	<p>There is no access to subsidised day-care facilities for staff.</p> <p>Educational allowances are paid to staff in accordance with the provisions of the Staff Regulations.</p> <p>School fees are not paid directly by Eurofound. Staff sending their children to private schools may qualify for the non-flat-rate education allowance (the child must be at least six years of age) in accordance with the provisions of the Staff Regulations.</p>

Annex IX: Evaluations

Eurofound's performance monitoring system (EPMS) aims to foster a culture of continuous organisational improvement using a series of instruments such as key performance indicators and metrics, user feedback, qualitative assessment and analysis, evaluation and learning. This approach supports the periodic external evaluation organised by the European Commission.⁴⁹

Eurofound has long-standing expertise and experience in the area of performance monitoring and evaluation. This is also further enhanced through close involvement in the EU Agencies' sub-network Performance Development Network, and takes into account recent developments and requirements for monitoring and evaluation for EU agencies.

Eurofound's 2021–2024 evaluation policy and evaluation programme consists of a modular approach to replace the conventional ex-ante / interim / ex-post evaluation approach at programme level, focusing in particular on the activity level of the new programme cycle.

In 2024, there will be the finalisation of the ex-ante evaluation of the 2025–2028 programming document, and the biennial user feedback survey. Additionally, at operational level, in preparation of future evaluations and audits, the approach to various processes, including research quality management will be reviewed and where necessary streamlined and documented.

Follow-up to evaluation findings

During 2024, Eurofound will respond to the recommendations from the cross-agencies evaluation of EU agencies under the remit of DG EMPL.

Performance monitoring

The Agency has a long tradition in monitoring the implementation of its annual work programme against a set of quantitative indicators. In the 2021–2024 programme, Eurofound uses eight key performance indicators (KPIs) with a strong emphasis on the result (uptake and use) of Eurofound's knowledge, as well its efficiency (inputs and outputs).

Key performance indicators	Source
Budget implementation – target 98%	Budgetary outturn account
Efficient use of posts available in the establishment plan – target 97%	The establishment plan approved for the respective year, and records of recruitments resulting in posts filled by 31 December of that same year
Programme delivery – target 80%	Report from Eurofound's project management system based on outputs listed in the Programming document of the respective year
Recognition of the scientific quality of Eurofound's research (references in articles in peer-reviewed journals)	Academic journal citations based on Scopus data

⁴⁹ Ex Article 28(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/127.

Uptake of and engagement with Eurofound's knowledge through its website and other corporate platforms	HTML page views	Data from Europa analytics
	PDF downloads	
Uptake of Eurofound's knowledge through the media		Eurofound's Media Monitoring Sheet using the Europe Media Monitor ⁵⁰ complemented with media search engine components of Mention, MyNewsDesk, and PressReader
Eurofound's engagement with stakeholders in meetings and events (out of contributions to events in total)		Eurofound's events tracking database
Uptake of Eurofound's expertise in key European-level policy documents (out of total European-level policy documents)		Eurofound EU impact tracking database

Most of these KPIs are also used at activity level

Key performance indicators	Applied to Operational Activity 1–7	Applied to Activity 8 Reacting to ad hoc information requests	Applied to horizontal Activity 9 and 10
Budget implementation – target 98%	✓ target 90% (tbc)	✓ target 90% (tbc)	target 90% (tbc)
Staff capacity – target 97%	X	X	X
Programme delivery – target 80%	✓	X Number of requests	✓
Recognition of the scientific quality of Eurofound's research (references in peer-reviewed journals)	✓	X	X
Uptake of and engagement with Eurofound's knowledge through its website and other corporate platforms	✓	x	X
Uptake of Eurofound's knowledge through the media	✓	X	X

⁵⁰ Developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Contributions to policy development at priority events (out of contributions to events in total)	✓	X	X
Use of Eurofound expertise in key European-level policy documents (out of total EU policy documents)	✓	X	X

The Agency collects and reports on various other metrics to support efficiency and effective operations at process and functional level notably around its communication programme as well as its financial performance.

Annex X: Strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems

Eurofound applies the 2018 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(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, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities
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

The internal control components are: **the control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication and monitoring activities**. They are the building blocks that underpin the framework's structure and support Eurofound in its efforts to achieve its objectives. The implementation of internal controls is monitored and an assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls is carried out on an annual basis. Any weaknesses identified are taken up in the annual work plan of the Coordinator internal control.

With a new anti-fraud strategy 2024–2026, the Agency continues its efforts on achieving a strong anti-fraud culture in Eurofound throughout awareness raising activities and promoting a strong connection between internal controls and anti-fraud prevention through mapping the effectiveness of controls and the removal of any barriers to effective implementation.

Risk management

Risk management is an ongoing activity of identifying and carefully assessing potential problems that could affect the execution of the organisation's activities and the achievement of its objectives.⁵¹ The risks in the table below refer to the multiannual programme period of 2021–2024 and reviewed and updated for the 2024 programming document. It documents the most significant residual risks at corporate level following an assessment of likelihood and impact. The actions are in addition to the internal controls in place and are specific for the relevant annual period. Following the risk review the action plan for 2024 is as follows.

⁵¹ Based on the Commission's Implementation Guide on Risk management, November 2018.

Risk title and description	Risk type	Risk Response	Action
Political and economic uncertainties continue to require an appropriate response from the organisation by integrating emerging priorities and new demands within the framework of the multiannual programme. This requires the flexibility to move resources that may be tied to longer term arrangements and continuous development of staff to seize opportunities for innovation and for contributing to policy developments in a timely manner.	External environment Organisational work processes	Accept	Continue to improve the organisational capacity to rapidly respond to changing priorities (modular implementation of activities, using the ad hoc request capacity, training and development, enhanced flexibility in administrative processes).
Implementation of hybrid working arrangements. As long-term implications of a hybrid work organisation are still evolving, the risk remains that some aspects of workplace engagement and productivity are negatively affected.	People and organisation	Reduce	Monitor and adjust the implementation of the provisions on working time and hybrid working to harness its full potential and accompany it with training for line managers and staff – as well as monitoring the performance of the organisation.
The budgetary consequences of inflation. Delivering the annual work programme while having to absorb the consequences of high inflation since 2020 through increasing efficiency measures and adapting multiannual activities has seen the Agency's capacity stretched beyond its limits. There is a risk that further inflation will impact operational priorities negatively.	Strategic external environment	Reduce	Continue to implement efficiency measures insofar possible. For the 2025–2028 multiannual programme, preparation processes took place to assess which projects and tasks were deemed most relevant in the context of the resource limitations, in close cooperation with the stakeholders in the Management Board. This process will continue in preparation of the approval of the 2025 annual work programme.

Risk title and description	Risk type	Risk Response	Action
Ongoing uncertainty about the implications of the methodological challenges and related costs, in the context of considerations on the overall budget and priorities of Eurofound, pose a risk to the medium-term sustainability and relevance of the Agency's survey activity.	Strategic and financial	Reduce	Use the experience and lessons learnt with different survey modes, together with the recommendations of the taskforce on data collection methods, to make an assessment and proposal for the Management Board on how to move forward with data collection in the preparation for the 2025–2028 programme period.
Overlap and lack of synergies with other organisations in areas of common interest and policy contribution leading to inefficiencies, lack of visibility and loss of opportunities for (costly) innovation.	Strategic and financial	Reduce	<p>Continue the implementation of the medium-/long-term roadmap for the Network of Eurofound Correspondents and seek opportunities for cooperation with Commission networks in preparation for defining the scope for the procurement procedure in 2025.</p> <p>Implement the 2023 strategy for cooperation with external partners at international, EU and national level.</p> <p>Work towards integrating Eurofound in the implementation of the European Commission's programme activities at an appropriate stage of the multiannual planning cycle</p>
Breach of Eurofound's data security will lead to loss, leakage or unavailability of data. This will cause business interruption, loss of reputation and/or regulatory incompliance. The resource investment required from the new Cybersecurity – and the Information Security Regulation	IT, Financial	Reduce	Eurofound has a clear commitment to reduce this risk demonstrated by the investment in resources including staffing and training and to implement the Cybersecurity – and the

Risk title and description	Risk type	Risk Response	Action
(expected to both come into effect in 2024) will impact heavily on the (ICT) budget and staffing. Non-compliance will lead to an increase in the threat of data breaches.			Information Security Regulation without delay. Continue building on the cooperation with DG DIGIT, CERT-EU and the intra-agency cooperation via ICTAC for exchange of information, best practices, as well as shared services where possible.
If unregulated, artificial intelligence can lead to lack of transparency, bias and security issues leading to reputational damage and financial cost, overshadowing its benefits.	People and organisation Communication	Reduce	Introduce guidelines for the use of generative AI within the Agency, and monitor its implementation.
Non-compliance with regulatory requirements	Finance and procurement HR Policies and processes	Reduce	In line with the very good results throughout the years, Eurofound will continue closely assessing and mitigating the risks related to its current activities, with a special attention to the largest expenditures. Risk mitigation plan for the EQLS as the largest single project for the next years (2024–2027). Closely follow the procedures prescribed, make regular implementation assessments. Exchange experience among agencies and seek methodological advice from ECA and IAS where necessary.

Following a risk assessment focusing specifically on Eurofound’s zero-tolerance to fraud during 2023, a strategy and action plan for 2024–2026 will be adopted in 2024.

Annex XI: Plan for grants, contribution or service-level agreements

Funds through a grant or contribution agreement for the year 2024, pursuant to Art 7 of the Framework Financial Regulation.

	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart	Short description		N = 2023	2024	2025	2026
Contribution agreement	8 May 2023	€900,000	36 months from date of signature	Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) – European Commission	Provision of comparative statistics and analysis on quality of life and work, and of support in social dialogue. Establishing networks in preparation for future collaboration at governance and expert level.	Amount	€810,000	tbc	tbc	€90,000
						Number of CA/ SNE	1 FGIV	1 FGIV	1 FGV	
Service level agreement	27 July 2023	€250,000	18 months from the date of signature	Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion – European Commission	Pilot project on working time reduction	Amount	€125,000	€100,000	€25,000	0

Annex XII: Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations

Addressed in [section 4.3](#): Strategy for relations with third countries and international organisations.

Annex XIII: Overview of projects in 2024 taking into consideration the rise of refugees and cost-of-living in the wake of the war in Ukraine

Activity	Projects	Output
Activity 1		
Activity 2		
	EU PolicyWatch	Possible update of policy measures in the database to include support measures for Ukrainian refugees and policies to offset the impact of the war in Ukraine, all depending on whether this emerges as a continuing topic.
	Annual report on minimum wage	Impact of increased inflation and cost of living on the developments of real minimum wages and minimum wage setting.
	National reporting on industrial relations, social dialogue and working-life	Identification if there is/has been an impact of the war in Ukraine in various aspects of working life.
Activity 3		
	European Restructuring Monitor databases – maintenance and update	Database will include cases linked to the war in Ukraine.
	Regional perspective of labour market change following the COVID-19 pandemic (continuation)	Report will include the regional development of the labour market, including the impact of the war in Ukraine.
	Company policies to tackle labour shortages (continuation)	Will include case studies focused on refugees from Ukraine.
Activity 4		
	Addressing challenges to mental health in Europe: Trends and services	Identification of possible impact of/measures to address arrival of refugees from Ukraine.
	Care provision and the role of informal carers	Identification of possible impact of/ measures to address arrival of refugees from Ukraine.
	European Child Guarantee	Identification of possible impact of/measures to address arrival of refugees from Ukraine.
Activity 5		
Activity 6		
	Social impact of migration: Addressing challenges in receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees (continuation)	Report on challenges related to receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees.
	Social cohesion and new forms of inclusive participation	Analysis of the perception of the war in Ukraine in Europe.
	Income inequalities and the middle class (continuation)	Inclusion of the issue of increasing cost-of-living in the research
	The dynamics of wealth inequality in Europe	Identification of possible impact of war in Ukraine will be explored.

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