



Mutual learning workshop on ‘Access to social protection for vulnerable groups of workers’

20-21 February 2025

Hotel Le Plaza Brussels

Boulevard Adolphe Max 118-126, Brussels

Agenda

Day 1 (Thursday 20 February)

08:30 – 09:00	Arrival and registration of participants
09:00 – 09:20	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <p><i>Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Director for Social Rights and Inclusion, DG EMPL, European Commission</i></p>
09:20 – 09:35	<p>Presentation by DG EMPL about recent developments in access to social protection</p> <p><i>Laurent Aujean, Social protection Unit, DG EMPL, European Commission</i></p>
09:35 – 10:05	<p>Thematic presentation on access of non-standard workers and self-employed to the unemployment benefits</p> <p><i>Nicola Duell, Thematic Expert</i></p> <p>Q&A</p>
10:05 – 11:05	<p>Presentations by Member States and stakeholders on extending coverage of unemployment benefits to non-standard forms of work and the self-employed: current gaps and recent reforms and innovative practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment benefits for the self-employed in cessation/suspension of activities: Bridging rights, <i>Julie Delforge, Belgian Federal Public Services Social Security, Belgium</i> • Unemployment benefit under the Social Security Act, <i>Adrian Sacco, Department of Social Security, Malta</i> • Job retention schemes in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic, <i>Dragos Adascalitei, Eurofound</i> <p>Q&A</p>

11:05 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:45	<p>Working group discussion on bridging gaps and advancing social protection for non-standard workers and self-employed</p> <p><i>Moderated discussions in three parallel working groups, providing opportunities for all participants to contribute with views and comments, using the following guiding questions:</i></p> <p>Group 1: Temporary Workers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main challenges for non-standard workers (e.g., temporary workers) and solo self-employed in accessing unemployment benefits, and how can we address them? 2. How can unemployment benefits systems be adjusted to include temporary contract workers (including seasonal workers)? 3. What lessons can we learn from measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve protection (e.g. more flexible/generous rules)? <p>Group 2: Self-employed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main challenges for non-standard workers (e.g., temporary workers) and solo self-employed in accessing unemployment benefits, and how can we address them? 2. What measures can be put in place to advance social protection for self-employed 3. Are rules adapted for self-employed or do the same rules as for employees apply? If so, how? <p>Group 3: Social protection in the context of labour market segmentation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main challenges for non-standard workers (e.g., temporary workers) and solo self-employed in accessing unemployment benefits, and how can we address them? 2. What complementary reforms (e.g. labour market) are needed to address issues like bogus self-employment and overuse of temporary contracts? 3. Can job retention schemes be extended to non-standard forms of work and self-employed and how? What lessons can be drawn from COVID-19 policy measures?
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch

13:45 – 15:00	<p>Presentations by Member States and stakeholders on ensuring access to unemployment benefits including by adaptation of rules governing entitlements and contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection for self-employed and seasonal workers', <i>Slavomir Duriska, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Slovakia</i> • Recent equalisation measures in coverage, unemployment benefits and contribution in the Spanish Special Scheme for Self-employed Workers, <i>Juan José Martínez Martínez, General Directorate of normative regulation of Social Security, Spain</i> • Social protection for self-employed workers – policy examples from non-EU countries, <i>Raphaella Hye, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i> <p>Q&A</p>
15:00 – 15:30	<p>Coffee break</p>
15:30 – 17:00	<p>Working group discussion on promoting effective and adequate coverage for vulnerable groups of workers</p> <p><i>Moderated discussions in three parallel working groups, providing opportunities for all participants to contribute with views and comments, using the following guiding questions:</i></p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What steps can be taken to design systems that provide protection and effective coverage for all workers, regardless of their employment relationship or labour market status? 2. How can contributions to social protection be made proportionate to the contributory capacity of workers and the self-employed? 3. How can social protection systems be adapted to ensure effective coverage for all to an adequate level of protection, while maintaining the financial sustainability of the system?
19:00 – 21:00	<p>Networking dinner at Aux Armes de Bruxelles</p>

Day 2 (Friday 21 February)

08:30 – 09:00	<p>Welcome coffee and registration of participants</p>
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Recap of the first day (including reporting from the workshop discussions)</p> <p><i>Nicola Duell, Thematic expert</i></p>

09:30 – 10:00	<p>Thematic presentation on ‘Towards labour status neutral social security protection? The need for equal protection and inclusive social security systems across employment types’</p> <p><i>Eleni De Becker, Thematic expert</i></p> <p>Q&A</p>
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Plenary discussion on the preservation and transferability of rights</p> <p>Table discussion using the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the challenges for workers moving between (or combining several) statuses in terms of preservation and transferability of social protection entitlements? 2. What mechanisms or reforms have been introduced to address these challenges (e.g. individualised social insurance accounts)?
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Coffee break</p>
11:30 – 12:40	<p>Panel on adapting social protection to non-standard workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Juliane Neiiendam, European Economic and Social Committee</i> • <i>Grace Papa, European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Union</i> • <i>Anneloes Goossens, VNO-NCW</i> • <i>Dana-Carmen Bachmann, Social Protection Unit, DG EMPL, European Commission</i>
12:40 – 13:00	<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Eleni De Becker, Thematic expert</i> • <i>DG EMPL, European Commission</i>
13:00 – 14:00	<p>Lunch</p>
14:00	<p>Close</p>