

Session Overview.

Session I. Access to the labour market.

- What are the key challenges that must be addressed to improve access to the labour market for all men and women?
- What are the national or EU initiatives that can be further developed to sustain job creation, remove obstacles and create the right conditions to entering and remaining in the labour market?

Session II. Fair employment and working conditions.

- How can decent and fair working conditions be ensured for all workers, regardless of their employment relationship?
- What are the national or EU initiatives that can be further developed to guarantee decent work and remuneration, and equitable access to welfare and social protection?

Session III. In between jobs: supporting transitions.

- What support do people need to reskill and upskill throughout their working life?
- What support do people need to be able to move and take up new job opportunities?
- What are the national or EU initiatives that can be further developed to better manage restructuring and job shifts and facilitate adjustments to future jobs?



EU facts and trends: a brief selection

Employment and working conditions

- 235 million men and women are employed in the EU today. 11 million jobs have been created since the height of the crisis in 2013.
- 71% of Europe's working age population is employed. EU Member States have committed to reach 75% by 2020. The employment rate ranges from just over 50% in certain countries to above 80% in others.
- Female employment rate is at 65.3% whereas male employment rate is at 76.9%.
- There are more women than men in part-time employment: 31.5% of women have part-time jobs; this is the case for only 8.2% of men.
- 14% of Europeans are self-employed, of those 10% are free-lancers and independent professionals and another 4% employ others.
- Unemployment has fallen to 7.6%. This is the lowest it has been in the past 9 years but 19.6 million people are unemployed. Almost 6.1 million of these have been without a job for more than 2 years.
- At 16.7%, youth unemployment is more than twice as high as the total unemployment rate. Youth unemployment has fallen significantly in recent years though it remains above 40% in certain countries.
- The average wage gap between men and women stands at 16.3%.
- In some Member States, people work for about 30 years before they retire; in others they work up to 40 years. The average age at which people retire from the labour market is just over 61.
- 40% of employers report difficulties in finding people with the skills they need to grow and innovate.

Social situation and living conditions

- Europe has the most educated workforce in its history: almost 40% of Europeans aged 25-39 hold a university degree; just over a decade ago it was around 25%.
- However, 70 million people lack adequate reading and writing skills; this is almost 14% of the EU's population.
- 44% of Europeans lack basic digital skills and 14% have never used the internet.
- 20% of women and less than 2% of men who are not working or looking for a job say family care responsibilities are the main reason for this.

- 1 out of 3 men who are not working and are not looking for a job report illness or disability as the main reason.
- The minimum period for paid maternity leave across Europe is 14 weeks, 2 of which are compulsory.
- Although working time and paid annual leave rights vary across Member States, the EU average is 33.8 days of annual vacation.
- Europe is home to the most equal societies in the world. However, inequality of income distribution has increased slightly since 2010, with the richest 20% of Europeans earning about five times more than the poorest 20%. Across the EU, 23.4% of Europeans are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Demographic trends

- In the space of a generation, the average European has gone from having a job for life to more than ten in a career.
- 16 million Europeans live and work in another EU Member State; just over a decade ago it was 8 million.
- There are more people above the age of 65 than children under 14.
- If current demographic trends continue, by 2060, there will be 38 million fewer Europeans of working age.
- This means that for every elderly person, there will be 2 people of working age. Today, there are 4.
- There are more people living alone than ever before; one third of all households in Europe are made up of 1 person.
- Almost three quarters (72.5 %) of EU28 inhabitants live in urban areas.

Europe in a global perspective

- Japan, Australia, Canada and Norway have higher labour force participation rates than EU28.
- Europe has higher levels of unemployment than the United States, Canada and Japan.
- In Japan and New Zealand, the employment rate of workers aged 55-64 is nearly 20 percentage points higher than the EU average.
- Europe is among the world leaders in gender equality, though gender pay gaps in Norway, Iceland and Australia are lower than the EU average.
- Today, in almost all OECD countries, more than half of all households have no children.