

Employment and social affairs: the Council adopts conclusions on well-being at work, upskilling and reskilling and demographic challenges

The Council adopted by written procedure three sets of conclusions in the area of employment and social affairs.

The conclusions on enhancing well-being at work acknowledge that well-being at work can lead to higher productivity and participation in the labour market and reduced public health expenditure. For companies, this ensures staff retention and reduced absenteeism. The conclusions call for the well-being perspective to be included in relevant policies at European and national level. Furthermore, the Council invites member states to enforce, with due regard to the competences of social partners, the EU legal framework and proceed with the implementation of the work-life balance directive.

The Council also adopted conclusions on reskilling and upskilling as a basis for increasing sustainability and employability, in the context of supporting economic recovery and social cohesion. The outbreak of COVID-19 has highlighted the crucial role of digital skills and competencies in ensuring business continuity, as well as in providing education and training remotely. Against this background, the Council invites member states to ensure that recovery plans include a strategic approach to reskilling and upskilling, as well as measures to adapt education and training based on the lessons learned from the crisis. The conclusions highlight the importance of promoting better use of EU financial instruments, namely the European Social Fund, Erasmus+ and InvestEU.

The conclusions on "Demographic challenges - the way ahead", take into account the current negative demographic trends in the EU, but also the additional demographic challenges that might surface in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council invites member states to involve the social partners, civil society and other relevant parties when developing and updating demographic policies. The Council also invites the Commission to ensure that investments through EU funds address demographic challenges at national and regional level, taking into account intra-EU mobility.

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