

European Employers and Trade Unions sign historic deal

Brussels, 28 June 2022 – European trade unions and employers will today sign a work programme, including to negotiate a legally binding agreement on ‘Telework and right to disconnect’.

ETUC, BusinessEurope, SGI Europe and SMEUnited will sign the Work Programme in the presence of European Commission Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis in a ceremony at 15.30-45 on Tuesday 28 June at 5 Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 1210 Brussels.

The Work Programme 2022-24 consists of 6 joint actions

Telework and right to disconnect

Review and update the 2002 Autonomous Agreement on Telework to be put forward for adoption as a legally binding agreement implemented via a Directive.

This is a key signal that the European social partners are committed to be key actors to shape the future labour markets functioning, and the first time such an agreement would be implemented as a Directive since 2010.

Green Transition

A framework of actions to ensure that a just transition, with appropriate public funding and investments, creates quality jobs and supports enterprises and workers adapting to change.

Youth employment

A joint seminar and statement following up on the ‘Framework of Actions on Youth Employment’ to explore best practices, challenges and tools to facilitate youth employment.

Work related privacy and surveillance

Joint seminar and guidelines on workplace monitoring and surveillance technologies to exchange views on the trends and their relevance for social partners and collective bargaining at all appropriate levels across Europe.

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EDITORS' NOTES: SMEUnited is the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe with 65-member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEUnited represents national cross-sectoral Craft and SME federations, European SME branch organisations and associate members. Combined, we represent more than 12 million enterprises with around 55 million employees across Europe. SMEUnited is a recognised employers' organisation and European Social Partner. SMEUnited was formerly known as UEAPME.

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Improving skills matching in Europe

A seminar followed by a joint research project on effective access to training, social partners' involvement in skills intelligence, and addressing skills mismatches and skills shortages.

Capacity building

A joint project to review the effectiveness of capacity building projects and identify obstacles to implementing existing social partner autonomous framework agreements.

Commenting on the Work Programme, **ETUC General Secretary Luca Visentini** said, "Agreements between unions and employers are the foundation of a decent society. This agreement is ambitious in what it aims to achieve and deals with several of the biggest challenges facing workers and businesses today."

BusinessEurope Director General Markus J. Beyrer said, "Social dialogue has a fundamental role to play in making our labour markets more productive, competitive and resilient. This work programme demonstrates a shared endeavour and commitment in times of rapid labour market change."

SGI Europe General Secretary Valeria Ronzitti said, "Ever more in times of crisis, social dialogue must deliver concrete results in support of enterprises and workers. That's what the Work Programme 2022-2024 is meant for, including by negotiations that will ensure a fair and sustainable digital and green transition across the EU taking into account the needs of employers and workers on the ground."

SMEunited Secretary General Véronique Willems said, "A good social dialogue is the best way to tackle the labour market and social challenges. SMEs and their team of staff count on social partners to set the right framework to work and do business in an appropriate environment. This is our joint aim with our well-targeted Work Programme."

ETUC Deputy General Secretary Esther Lynch said, "Agreeing to negotiate an EU Directive on Telework and the right to disconnect is good news for employers and workers alike. It shows that where there is a will, even the most difficult issues can be resolved by constructive negotiations."

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