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From: Secretary-General of the European Commission,  
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

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To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of  
the European Union

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Subject: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
OF THE EVALUATION of the EU Commission Agencies working in the  
employment and social affairs policy field: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF  
and EU-OSHA

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Delegations will find attached document SWD(2019) 160 final.

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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**

**of the**

**EU Commission Agencies working in the employment and social affairs policy field:**

**EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA**

{SWD(2019) 159 final}

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff working document (SWD) presents the main findings of the evaluation of the EU Agencies working in the employment and social affairs policy field for the period 2011-2016.

### Background and context.

There are four decentralised EU Agencies working in the employment and social affairs policy field, namely: the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). The prime objective of these Agencies is to generate knowledge and contribute to the policy process in their respective fields of activity. According to their Founding Regulations:

- 1) *Eurofound* aims to contribute to the planning and establishment of better living and working conditions through action designed to increase and disseminate knowledge likely to assist this development;
- 2) *Cedefop*'s aim is to assist the Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training;
- 3) The objective of *ETF* is to contribute, in the context of EU external relations policies, to improving human capital development in partner countries; and
- 4) The aim of *EU-OSHA* is to provide Community bodies, Member States, social partners and those involved in the field with the technical, scientific and economic information of use in the field of safety and health at work.

The evaluation was launched in 2016 in the context of the revision of the Founding Regulations of the three tripartite Agencies (Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA), which have been amended to partially adapt them to the 2012 Common Approach. This overall evaluation aims to assess retrospectively the individual performance of the Agencies during the 2011-2016 period and to find out possible synergies and efficiency gains that could be achieved within the boundaries of the current regulatory framework. The assessment was aimed to complement the proposals of the revised Founding regulations.

### Main findings and lessons learnt

- **Effectiveness:** The Agencies *have operated overall effectively*, delivered the planned outputs, achieved the specific objectives planned in their work programs and contributed towards the general objectives, providing timely contributions that fed into EU policy making or, in the case of ETF, providing advice that supported policy making in the partner countries.

There are several avenues *for improvement*, including enhancing the *quality* of outputs in face of the budgetary constraints, more *timely delivery* of certain outputs, and increasing the *accessibility/readability* of certain outputs to non-specialists and non-English speakers. There is a need to diversify the *communication* channels and to increase the use and dissemination of their outputs to wider stakeholders. Crucially, the Agencies should better align their activities to the EU policy priorities and improve their ability to respond

to the requests and emerging needs at the EU-level, as illustrated by the case of the migration crisis.

- **Efficiency:** Overall, the Agencies also demonstrated a *high level of efficiency*. Despite the budget savings and decreasing staff numbers, the usage of Agencies' outputs increased throughout the evaluation period and user satisfaction remained high.

The tripartite structure and composition of the Governing Boards of Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA departs from the Common Approach. While their tripartite structure sometimes entails differing views of members of the Governing Board as regards objectives of the Agencies, it overall contributes to the relevance, use and dissemination of the Agencies' work. Based on the evaluation assessment, there is room for further improving the use of tripartite channels for better use of Agencies outputs at national level.

- **Relevance:** The outputs and services of the four Agencies were relevant both from the perspective of contribution to key EU-level policy objectives, as well as from the standpoint of stakeholders. However, the Agencies' planning process and resource limitations create a gap between what is expected from the Agencies by the Commission, Member States and social partners, and what the Agencies can deliver.
- **Added Value:** The EU added value of the tripartite Agencies consists of the unique combination of outputs and services that are not available in other institutions or research centres. This includes EU-wide comparable data, tripartite scrutiny, policy orientation and specific focus on EU policy needs. Furthermore, the ETF provides tailored evidence-based policy support to third countries in the context of EU external policies.
- In the assessment of **coherence** amongst the four Agencies, the evaluation identified some overlaps at the level of their respective general mandates, in particular between Cedefop and ETF, both in charge of VET policy, and between Eurofound and EU-OSHA. Nevertheless, the ETF and Cedefop have different operational objectives and territorial scope. The four Agencies have developed mechanisms for exchange of information and cooperation.
- There is room for improving cooperation amongst Agencies. Cooperation remains largely bi-lateral, one-off, bottom-up and mostly consists of knowledge-exchange and joint participation in events. However, it lacks joint strategic planning, which is needed for better coordinating across Agencies the responses to future common social and economic challenges at the EU level. Therefore, there are opportunities to further reduce costs, increase efficiency and achieve stronger synergies through reinforced cooperation.
- The four Agencies have clearly different mandates and scope than the proposed European Labour Authority, as they are predominantly research-centred, compared to the Authority operational focus. However, they could usefully support and contribute to the new Authority.