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#### NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Work Programme of the Employment Committee for 2022

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Delegations will find attached the 2022 Work Programme of the Employment Committee and its subgroups, as adopted in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 14 March 2022 (Any Other Business item).

## EMCO Work Programme for 2022

The Employment Committee (EMCO) is a Treaty-based advisory Committee, established in accordance to Article 150 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU). It acts as an advisory body to the EPSCO Council and is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the employment situation and policies in the Member States and the Union. In performing its tasks, it should promote multilateral discussion on policy developments and new initiatives in domains under its remit.

Every year, EMCO adopts its annual Work Programme, which defines its activities for the coming year. The discussions in EMCO on the draft 2022 Work Programme will take place on 15 December 2021. The Work Programme will be presented at the March 2022 EPSCO.

Currently, EMCO's work programme covers four main areas – the European Semester (notably multilateral surveillance), thematic work, benchmarking and monitoring/reporting. EMCO's work, in particular concerning benchmarking and monitoring/reporting, is supported by the EMCO Indicators Group, which has its own Work Programme linked to the main priorities of EMCO, and by the EMCO PAG. EMCO provides input to their activities.

The efforts already undertaken to focus and streamline certain Semester formats and working methods with regard to the work of EMCO and its working groups, as well as the close cooperation with SPC, EPC and EDUC, will continue in 2022.

## 1. Strategic priorities

EMCO will consider necessary adjustments to its Work Programme stemming from the policy priorities highlighted in the **Strategic Agenda of the European Council** and the **Commission's political priorities and work programme**<sup>1</sup>, which are relevant to its remit, and which will require the preparation of input to EPSCO. Depending on respective timeframes, EMCO will stand ready to engage in the consultation and/or presentation of relevant policy initiatives, especially as regards the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**. In this context, EMCO is also ready to provide its view on the national targets set by the Member States to achieve the new EU 2030 headline targets on employment and adult training, as welcomed by the **European Council** on 24-25 June 2021, in line with the Porto Declaration of 7-8 May. EMCO will take into consideration the [European Year of Youth](#) and will therefore put particular attention to youth in all its activities in 2022.

Among others, the following policy and funding initiatives (either announced or ongoing) would be of relevance for EMCO's work in 2022:

- 1) The strategic priorities to be defined in view of the Commission work programme, for example:
  - December 2021 package of EU initiatives:
    - Recommendations on Individual Learning Accounts and micro-credentials
    - Recommendation on social impact of the climate transition
    - [Action Plan to boost the social economy and create jobs](#)
    - Proposal for a Directive to [improve the working conditions in platform work](#)

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy-documents/commission-work-programme/commission-work-programme-2022\\_en#documents](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy-documents/commission-work-programme/commission-work-programme-2022_en#documents)

- ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) – initiative aimed at young people not in employment, education or training (Q2 2022)
  - Communication to Strengthen Social Dialogue at EU and national levels
  - Communication on a European Care Strategy, accompanied by the revision of the Barcelona targets (Q3 2022)
  - Review of the quality framework for traineeships (Q4 2022)
  - Assessment of the SURE mechanism
  - Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training (Q3 2022) and the ongoing structured dialogue on digital education and skills
  - Employment package to improve labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities (Q3 2022)
- 2) Developments and national initiatives related to the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the respective national recovery and resilience plans, Members States' programming of cohesion policy funding (notably REACT-EU and the ESF+) as well as other relevant EU funding instruments.

As a follow-up to its joint work with SPC on the assessment of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and in line with the new 2030 EU headline targets, EMCO will continue to adjust its working methods, reporting tools, and monitoring framework(s) and the way to achieve a wider dissemination of the Committee's outputs.

## 2. Existing commitments

### 2.1. European Semester / Multilateral surveillance

EMCO has a number of commitments under the European Semester. These commitments determine much of the Committee's calendar for the year. Following the adoption of the Semester Autumn Package on 24 November 2021, which kick-started the new cycle for 2022, EMCO will continue to work on recurrent activities, notably:

- Preparation of **Council Conclusions on the 2022 Annual Sustainable Growth Survey and the Joint Employment Report** (March EPSCO);
- Finalisation and adoption of the **2022 Joint Employment Report** (March EPSCO);
- Revision or re-conduction of the **Employment Guidelines**;
- **Multilateral Surveillance (MLS)** regarding the implementation of employment policies in Member States<sup>2</sup>. EMCO will do this work in conjunction with its Policy Analysis Group (PAG). Based on the positive experience of last years, EMCO will continue to strengthen the horizontal discussion on each thematic area preceding the Multilateral Surveillance Reviews;
- EMCO will continue to have **joint MLS sessions with the Social Protection Committee (SPC) and the Education Committee (EDUC)**, where crosscutting issues are reviewed jointly;
- Monitoring of the employment situation based on the **Employment Performance Monitor (EPM)**;
- **Joint Opinion on the 2022 cycle of the European Semester** with the **Social Protection Committee** (for June EPSCO);
- Input in preparation of the **2023 ASGS**;
- Discussion on Commission's proposal for the **Euro Area Recommendation** (November-December).

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<sup>2</sup> EMCO's conclusions are subsequently used in the negotiations on new CSRs .

EMCO and its Indicators Group will continue to produce the Employment Performance Monitor. EMCO will submit this to the October EPSCO Council, alongside the EMCO Annual Performance Report and key messages about the employment situation in the EU. This will represent EMCO's contribution to the preparation of the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey for 2023, which will start the 2023 Semester cycle.

The committee will continue to discuss labour market developments and challenges, including related to the impact of the COVID crisis, labour and skills shortages, and employment and social aspects of the green and digital transitions.

All EMCO activities, including data collection, analysis, monitoring and follow-up should, as far as possible, be gender-mainstreamed.

## **2.2. Collaboration with other committees and stakeholders**

In fulfilling its Semester-related obligations, EMCO will work closely with other Council advisory bodies and preparatory committees, notably with the Social Protection Committee (SPC), the Economic Policy Committee (EPC) and the Education Committee (EDUC).

As in previous years, cooperation with EPC could be organised through joint thematic discussions and in line with the Commission work programme.

More regular and extensive exchanges of views between EMCO and EDUC could be organised alongside the EMCO-EDUC reviews of CSRs, notably on thematic aspects of common interest such as adult learning, digital and green skills, skills matching and VET. In line with the institutional setting of the Treaty, EDUC input to EMCO on relevant deliverables could be considered.

Collaboration with the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network) will continue – e.g. through participation in meetings and with the Indicators Group on the effectiveness of labour market policies and bench-learning.

In 2022, EMCO will continue its practice to involve, when relevant, the **European Social Partners** and the **Civil Society Organizations**.

### 2.3. Thematic work

EMCO will also carry out as part of its regular work **thematic reviews**<sup>3</sup>, some of which in the past have usefully fed into the preparation of Council Conclusions<sup>4</sup> and Commission initiatives.<sup>5</sup> EMCO will continue to be involved in the review of the employment aspects of the Economic Reform Programme with the Western Balkans and Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

EMCO will continue to deliver on its **review commitments on two Recommendations**, namely on **Long-Term Unemployment (LTU)**, foreseen for 2022<sup>7</sup>, and the **Youth Guarantee (YG)** in 2023 as well as on the involvement of the social partners in the European Semester (**Social Dialogue**<sup>8</sup>). While the review on social dialogue is organised every year, the reviews on the two Council Recommendations take place in alternate years. In case there are relevant CSRs, EMCO will also review their implementation in the context of these thematic reviews. In doing so, and in particular in the context of virtual meetings, EMCO could build upon previous experience and ensure more thematic and discussion-oriented reviews (based on previously submitted discussion questions and including the discussion of case studies/ “good practices” presented by Member States).

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<sup>3</sup> In-depth thematic reviews form a key Committee instrument, helping Member States learn from one another, engaging in multilateral discussions on successful measures addressing policy challenges in the areas of employment, social protection and social inclusion.

<sup>4</sup> For example: on Early Childhood Development under the Bulgarian presidency or on the Future of Work under the Austrian Presidency.

<sup>5</sup> For example: thematic work on reconciliation of private and professional life as an input to the work-life balance package; and review on social protection gaps as an input to the Access to social protection initiative.

<sup>6</sup> In the context of the Economic and Financial Dialogue, the Western Balkan countries and Turkey submit annual Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs) to the European Commission, which are assessed in EPC and EMCO meetings in April. This assessment leads to 'joint conclusions' with targeted policy guidance, agreed by EFC and adopted by the Economic and Financial Dialogue between EU Member States and the Western Balkans and Turkey, adjacent to the ECOFIN Council meeting.

<sup>7</sup> The 2019 Commission evaluation of the implementation of the LTU Recommendation (COM(2019) 169 final), called for a holistic approach towards activation and integration of social and employment services. To that end, a joint EMCO-SPC review session was conducted in 2020 and shall be continued in 2022.

<sup>8</sup> A review involving national social partners may also be conducted in a thematic way and/or on a different topic of joint interest.

In its thematic work, EMCO will also take into account the **priorities of the French (January – June) and Czech Presidencies (July – December)**. The priorities of the French Presidency will include the continued implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the consolidation of an inclusive European recovery, and support for major economic changes, particularly digital and green transitions. The key messages resulting from thematic events (on Presidency policy priorities) are transmitted to the Council<sup>9</sup> or act as input to the preparation of Council Conclusions.

Given the paramount role that the RRF will play in the 2022 Semester, EMCO will provide, in close cooperation with the SPC, inputs to the Council regarding employment and skills policy-related reforms and investments in the national Recovery and Resilience Plans.

## **2.4. Benchmarking and monitoring frameworks**

In line with its general aim to support structural reforms and upward social convergence, benchmarking is a vehicle to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. As such, it is used as a tool for building evidence base for CSRs under the European Semester and as an instrument for mutual learning under the Social Open Method of Coordination. Since 2016, EMCO, together with SPC, and with the active support of the Commission (DG EMPL), has been carrying out work in developing benchmarking frameworks, being a comparative assessment of country performance and policies using agreed policy indicators.

EMCO will continue to work on benchmarking proposals from the Commission, which contribute to the analysis underpinning work on the Semester.

In addition to the development of benchmarking frameworks, EMCO is also involved in the regular development of indicators and analytical frameworks. The EMCO and SPC indicators groups will contribute to the refinement of the indicators and methodology used under the Social Scoreboard, notably its secondary indicators, and the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF). Furthermore, based on work by its Indicators Group, EMCO will reflect on how to transform and adapt the EPM notably in light of the Social Scoreboard.

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, in 2020 under the German Presidency two thematic events on short-time work schemes and equivalent employment measures in the context of the COVID-19 crisis took place and resulted in key messages which were transmitted to the DE PRES.



## **2.5. Possible topics for EMCO PAG thematic events**

In addition to thematic discussions as part of the MLS reviews, EMCO/EMCO PAG could replicate the successful experience of past thematic events by carrying out further events on policy topics of interest to Members.

## **3. Working methods**

The Employment Committee will continue to meet virtually as long as health-related restrictions require it to do so. Virtual meetings should not in any case prejudice the multilateral nature of EMCO debates and its activity.

## PROVISIONAL MEETINGS CALENDAR FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2022

The calendar below is provisional and indicative. The Work Programme will be updated whenever needed throughout 2022, including in relation to the upcoming work between February and May on the proposal for a **Social Imbalances Procedure (SIP)**.

<i>DATES</i>	<i>COMMITTEE(S)</i>	<i>MAIN AGENDA POINTS</i>
<b>25 January</b>	<b>IG (partly joint with ISG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>YG – LTU monitoring</b></li> <li>• <b>Draft Roadmap for the 2021 EPM</b></li> </ul> <i>Joint with the SPC ISG:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>JER main body discussion (with ISG)</b></li> </ul>
<b>7 February</b>	<b>EMCO – SPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ASGS Council conclusions and JER Key messages – input to March EPSCO</b></li> <li>• <b>JER main body - approval</b></li> <li>• <b>SIP</b></li> </ul>
<i>15 February</i>	<i>Informal EPSCO (Bordeaux)</i>	
<b>7 March</b>	<b>EMCO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MLS: ALMPs and PES</b></li> </ul>
<b>10 March (TBC)</b>	<b>IG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>JAF KECs/ EPM</b></li> </ul>
<i>14 March</i>	<i>EPSCO Council</i>	
<b>15 March</b>	<b>PAG Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MLS: Labour Market Segmentation, Labour Taxation, Undeclared Work</b></li> </ul>

<b>16 March</b>	<b>EMCO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>TBD</i></li> </ul>
<b>23-24 March</b> <i>(TBC)</i>	<b>EMCO-EDUC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MLS:</b> <b>Education and Skills –</b> <b>Joint reviews and</b> <b>thematic discussions</b></li> </ul>
<b>26 April</b>	<b>EMCO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dialogue with Western</b> <b>Balkans and Turkey</b></li> </ul>
<b>First week of</b> <b>May</b> <i>(TBD)</i>	<b>EMCO-SPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MLS:</b> <b>LM female participation</b> <b>linked to ECEC;</b> <b>Income support and</b> <b>access to social</b> <b>protection;</b> <b>Access to integrated</b> <b>employment and social</b> <b>services.</b></li> </ul>
<b>19-20 May</b>	<b>EMCO Informal FR PCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>TBD</i></li> </ul>
<b>23 May</b> <i>(TBC)</i>	<b>IG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adoption EPM</b></li> </ul>
<b>30-31 May, 1</b> <b>June</b> <i>(TBC)</i>	<b>EMCO-SPC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CSRs</b></li> </ul>
<b>10 June</b>	<b>EMCO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>TBD</i></li> </ul>
<i>16 June</i>	<i>EPSCO Council</i>	
<b>23 June</b>	<b>IG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AEPR 2022</b></li> </ul>

## Second half of 2022<sup>10</sup>:

- Annual review on Social Dialogue (with social partners) / thematic event with involvement of social partners
- EMCO meeting hosted by the Czech Presidency - second half of September
- Review of the LTU Recommendation
- Finalisation of EMCO Annual Employment Performance Report (after IG)

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<sup>10</sup> A more detailed planning for the second half of 2022 will be provided before the summer.

**EMCO Indicators Group Work Programme 2022****a) EMCO Indicators Group Core Business**

In 2022, the EMCO Indicators Group (EMCO IG) will continue to support EMCO in the quantitative description and analysis of relevant policy issues. The broad EMCO priorities imply that the EMCO IG will continue to support the surveillance and monitoring capacities of EMCO in the following ways:

**The European Semester**

- It will discuss the analytical content of the draft Joint Employment Report, including the use and interpretation made of the Social Scoreboard. Particular attention will be devoted to the issue of monitoring upward social convergence.
- It will update the Employment Performance Monitor (EPM) and identify the key employment challenges and good labour market outcomes of the Member States and the EU as a whole.
- It will produce the EMCO Annual Employment Performance Report, which will represent EMCO's contribution to the preparation of the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey.
- It will reflect on how to adapt the EPM ensuring consistent use of indicators with the Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. The particular focus will be on the relevant headline indicators of the Social Scoreboard.
- Together with the Social Protection Committee Indicators Subgroup (SPC ISG), it will contribute to the refinement of the indicators and methodology used under the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF).

- This can include revisiting the 10 JAF Policy Areas and refining the list of indicators in view of enhancing the usability of the tool and better reflecting the latest Employment Guidelines.
- It will continue to work on the benchmarking proposals from the Commission to contribute to the analysis underpinning work on the Semester. In particular, work will continue on completing the benchmarking framework on unemployment benefits and active labour market policies (ALMPs) (as regards the part related to early activation of unemployed job seekers).

### **Monitoring of Council Recommendations**

The EMCO IG will continue its work on analysing the results of the data collections on monitoring the Council Recommendations on Youth Guarantee and on Long-term unemployed. When necessary, the EMCO IG will evaluate the pertinent Indicator Frameworks building on relevant work, which followed the adoption of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee Council Recommendation.

### **Follow-up to the European Pillar of Social Rights and implementation of its Action Plan**

The IG will stand ready to contribute to relevant aspects related to the implementation of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and the monitoring of progress towards the new employment rate and adult training targets for 2030. The EMCO IG will also continue its work on improving the reading of the Social Scoreboard.

The EMCO IG will reflect on adapting its working methods, reporting tools, and monitoring framework(s). In particular, jointly with the SPC ISG, the group will reflect on the role of the EPSR scoreboard in relation to other existing monitoring tools (EPM, JAF, SPPM). It will further reflect on the scope to simplify the existing tools in line with the findings from the assessment report of the EMCO and SPC on the Europe 2020 Strategy.

## **Employment indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The EMCO IG is ready to follow up and support the work carried out by the Commission on employment indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Developments Goals.

### **Other analytical areas**

The EMCO IG will continue its work on monitoring multidimensional policy concepts through the JAF. The EMCO IG will look (when and if necessary) at the results of impact assessment studies, especially on the impact of ESF financed measures in the context of employment policies and the effectiveness of labour market policies.

### **b) Working Methods**

The impact of possible new activities that EMCO decides to undertake in the course of 2022 will be assessed and the EMCO IG work programme will be adjusted as necessary.

The main discussions of the EMCO IG take place during its scheduled meetings. In order to facilitate the discussion and to allow Members to prepare adequately for the meeting, documents will be sent sufficiently in advance of the meeting, when possible.

Written procedures can be helpful in the follow-up to meetings, when agreements have to be reached before the next scheduled meeting or when documents are circulated too close to the meeting date, but should not replace discussions in the working group on a regular basis.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis and consequent restrictions on physical meetings when necessary, arrangements will be made to facilitate the hosting of meetings via teleconferencing tools (e.g. Webex) continuing on the experience of 2020 and 2021.

When the number of agenda items does not justify full-day meetings in Brussels, the EMCO IG Secretariat will also envisage organising written procedures and/or videoconferences instead of scheduled meetings, with the approval of the EMCO IG Chair.

Building on past successful experience, the EMCO IG could envisage organising *ad hoc* working groups consisting of a few Member States to develop proposals to be discussed in the EMCO IG concerning specific areas of the EMCO IG work such as revising/developing a policy area or developing indicators for monitoring a specific subject.

### **c) Co-operation with other Committees and institutions**

The EMCO IG will continue to promote close working relationships with all other relevant committees, particularly on work related to the JAF and the scoreboard for monitoring of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the EMCO IG Chair and the Secretariat will regularly update the Members on relevant work carried out in the other committees.

In addition to the close cooperation with the SPC ISG (notably in the context of the work on the JAF and the Social scoreboard), the EMCO IG will continue its collaboration with the EPC subgroup that deals with the Europe 2020 monitoring (LIME) in order to enhance consistency between its work and macro-economic monitoring; Similarly, it will work with DG EAC's Standing Group on indicators and benchmarks (SGIB) with respect to the benchmarking work on skills and measuring the education headline targets, the Eurostat Working Group on labour market statistics (LAMAS) and the PES Network focusing on their PES bench-learning (in particular on the effectiveness of labour market policies), as well as with the European Platform on preventing and deterring undeclared work..

The EMCO IG will continue to promote cooperation with other institutions and bodies carrying work in the area of analysis of the labour market, including CEDEFOP, EUROFOUND, and international organisations such as ILO and OECD. It will also monitor research of potential interest for its work, especially through cooperation with several services of the Commission.



## Specific methodological issues

In order to enhance surveillance and monitoring capacities, and to facilitate the link with the qualitative aspects of the monitoring, a number of additional specific methodological issues could merit further attention. Work in relevant areas will be prioritised to follow the work of EMCO (pending the adoption of the EMCO Work programme).

## Provisional meetings for 2021

Date	Venue/Video call	Main topics
21 January		LTU Recommendation data update Discussion of draft Roadmap for the 2022 Employment Performance Monitor  Joint with the SPC ISG (20 or 21 Jan): Joint Employment Report
10 March (date tbc)		Adoption of non-JAF based KECs
23 May (date tbc)		Adoption EPM
23 June		
09 September		AEPR 2022 Key Messages
18 October (tbc)		ESDE
15 November		YG – LTU monitoring data collection results
08 December		EMCO IG WP 2023  Joint with the SPC ISG: Draft JER

The calendar above is provisional and subject to change. Two or three joint EMCO IG-SPC ISG meetings will be organised in 2022.

Extraordinary videoconference meetings can be planned according to the needs of the group and in line with the policy agenda.

The list of main topics for each meeting presents the timeline for the presentation and adoption of the regular deliverables of the EMCO IG and is not exhaustive.

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