



International
Labour
Organization



► The EU-ILO Partnership

2022

► EU-ILO strategic partnership

Thanks to a shared vision that economic and social progress should go hand in hand, the European Union -ILO partnership fosters impactful initiatives in support of Decent Work and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This close relationship involves different modalities of cooperation from policy dialogue and knowledge sharing to development cooperation activities.

EU development priorities

The EU adopted the European Consensus on Development in 2017, as part of its response to the

UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The consensus defines a shared vision and action framework for development cooperation. The EU's commitments include promoting greater coherence between the EU and its Member States' activities and strengthened partnerships with multilateral organizations. This ambition was then translated into the new Multiannual Financial Framework which foresees a strengthened collaboration with the EU Member States' development agencies and the international organizations notably through the "Team Europe" approaches as developed within [The Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument](#).

EU and ILO stand in solidarity with the government, workers and employers of Ukraine

In March 2022, the ILO Governing Body adopted a resolution on the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, calling on Russia to 'immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression', and expressing unwavering support for the tripartite constituents in Ukraine.

In 2020, an EU-funded ILO project was initiated in Ukraine to promote safe, healthy and declared work in Ukraine. The project aims to help approximate national legislation to the international and European labour standards. It has also trained Ukrainian experts on labour relations, occupational safety and health and labour inspection. As a result, so far, 455,547 undeclared workers have been regularized, and the project's campaign has reached 4.5 million persons. As the ILO Director-General said in his statement condemning the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine "the ILO's duty is to stand in solidarity with the government, workers, and employers of Ukraine and to join with the rest of the United

Nations system in providing all possible assistance to them". In this spirit, the ILO remains committed to the implementation of this action.



credit: Yuriy Dyachyshyn - AFP

Policy dialogue and exchange of expertise

The European Commission and the ILO engage in knowledge sharing and policy dialogue on development priorities during their annual High-Level Meetings. The 2020 edition addressed the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, and the recovery from the crisis. Key areas of collaboration were discussed, including jobs, growth and investment, youth employment, gender equality, skills development, social protection, working conditions in global supply chains and social dialogue. Exchanges on

research activities include areas such as the changing nature of jobs, non-standard forms of employment and the digital and green transition.

Both organizations work towards a human-centred future of work, based on the implementation of the [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). Our partnership aims to support a recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, and is guided by ILO's [Global call to action for a human-centred recovery](#) and the European Commission's [Communication on decent work worldwide](#).

► The EU's financial contributions: facts and figures

In addition to individual EU Member State contributions, the EU funds ILO Development Cooperation to advance the Decent Work Agenda throughout the world. Providing USD 445 million in voluntary contributions between 2014 and 2021, the EU supports 50 ongoing actions and is the largest donor to the ILO's development cooperation programme.

EU and ILO collaboration: geographical scope, 2018-2022



The [ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard](#) provides a more detailed overview.

Decent work in global supply chains

The EU is committed to supporting its partner countries to manage supply chains responsibly.



Since 2018, the EU and ILO in cooperation with FAO have been collaborating to tackle child labour and forced labour in the cotton, textile and garment value chains in Burkina Faso, Mali, Pakistan and Peru. The [Clear Cotton](#) project aims to promote enhanced national legislative frameworks and policies and to prompt (joint) actions by stakeholders. The project builds the capacity of labour inspectors, workers' and employers' representatives and producers' organizations to tackle child labour and forced labour. More than 5,000 children in or at risk of forced labour already benefitted from school reintegration programmes offered by the project and more than 2,300 beneficiaries of the income-generating activities do not rely on child labour anymore.

In 2021, the EU and ILO launched the project [Sustainable supply chains to build forward better](#). The project aims to promote decent work in global supply chains for a fair, resilient and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. This includes the development of knowledge, tools, policy advice and training to address decent work challenges and opportunities in five sectors: coffee, electronics, fisheries, rubber gloves and textiles.

The EU supports the [Vision Zero Fund](#) (VZF), a G7 initiative which aims to prevent work-related deaths,

injuries and diseases in global supply chains. The VZF works at global level and in eight countries, covering the garment, agricultural and construction sectors. The programme has helped to improve the health and safety of more than 7 million workers, and improved the capacities of over 54,000 government officials, employers and workers.

The EU also supports the [Better Work](#) programme. A partnership between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation, Better Work brings together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and respect of labour rights for workers and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses. The programme reaches 1,700 factories employing more than 2.4 million workers. The EU has supported programmes in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Jordan, Pakistan, Madagascar and Sri Lanka. In these country programmes, Better Work works at the enterprise and national levels to improve gender equity and inclusion, strengthen mechanisms for social dialogue, improve OSH and COVID-19 awareness and protection, ensure fair wage payment and working hours, and address the environmental impacts of the industry.

A partnership between the EU, ILO and OECD is enhancing respect for decent work, International Labour Standards, human rights and environmental sustainability through the promotion of responsible business conduct in six EU trading partner countries in Asia (China, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam). The [Responsible Supply Chains in Asia](#) action fosters responsible behaviour and institutions among policy makers, the private sector and workers' organizations, including by supporting the creation of enabling policy environments and tripartite plus dialogue platforms.

The project [Responsible business conduct \(RBC\) in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), implemented in partnership with the EU, OECD and OHCHR, promotes smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU and in Latin America and the Caribbean, including national activities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru. It has supported the adoption and implementation of national action plans on business and human rights, established a fund to provide grants for RBC initiatives (including those targeting SMEs), and strengthened the capacity of stakeholders, mainly enterprises, in undertaking due diligence processes.

Universal social protection



With the ambition to [improve synergies between social protection and public finance management](#), the ILO, in partnership with UNICEF and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, is implementing an EU-funded programme to strengthen social protection systems at a national level and ensure sustainable financing. Activities focus on enhancing the design and implementation of social protection policies and programmes, improving their financing through strong public finance management and ensuring that they are gender-sensitive, disability-inclusive and adapted to respond to crises. The project is an important element of the ILO [Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for all](#).

Employment impact assessment of trade and investment

Recognizing the importance of investment and trade for job creation, the EU supports two programmes aimed at enhancing the capacity to assess employment outcomes, in sub-Saharan Africa ([STRENGTHEN2](#)) and in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood ([METI](#)). Both programmes pursue the goal of leveraging employment impact assessments to promote the creation of more and better jobs.

Economic empowerment of women at work

Both the EU and the ILO focus on mainstreaming gender equality across various sectors. Under the [EU-UN Spotlight Initiative](#) to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, ILO pilots a joint programme with UN Women and UNODC on promoting and protecting the rights of women migrant workers within and from the ASEAN region. The project has built the capacities of 25,000 persons on women migrant workers' rights, as well as skills to address violence against them. It has organized 3,200 women migrant workers into workers' unions and supported the formation of four unions and a migrant domestic workers' organization. Over 108,000 women migrants have received job skills training, psychosocial, social or legal services.

The ILO in partnership with UN Women implemented the [We empower – G7](#) action, aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment at work through responsible business practices in G7 countries. This initiative documented and disseminated illustrative practices of how governments, enterprises and workers' organizations are promoting women's economic empowerment, developed the 'Empowering Women at Work' capacity development platform which hosts a range of learning resources for companies and policy makers, and supported, in partnership with ITUC, the development of training to enhance women's leadership in trade unions.

Implementation of fundamental ILO Conventions

Through the [Trade for Decent Work](#) project, the EU supports the promotion and the application of the fundamental ILO Conventions in a number of partner countries, including those benefiting from preferential export schemes. The project covers Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Ivory Coast, Ecuador, Ghana, Madagascar, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam. Interventions aim at raising awareness and building the capacity of the national administration, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, judges and parliamentarians to improve the implementation of International Labour Standards and compliance with reporting obligations. In 2021, meaningful steps were taken among the African countries to build a common understanding of the ILO Declaration concerning multinational enterprises and its principles.

The [Ship to Shore Rights](#) project worked with the Thai government, employers' organizations, trade unions and buyers to prevent and reduce unacceptable forms of work in Thailand's fishing and seafood industries. Thailand was the first country in Asia to ratify the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention in 2018 and the Work in Fishing Convention in 2019. The EU and ILO continue to support safe labour migration and decent work in the fishing and seafood processing sectors in South East Asia. A programme launched in 2020 strengthens legal frameworks, protects labour rights and empowers workers in the fishing and seafood processing sectors in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. In Myanmar, the project supported fishers in filing a legal complaint. As a result, they received all outstanding wages from their Thai employer.

Skills development, employability and youth employment

The ILO and the EU jointly deliver skills development programmes, focussing strategically on the employability of young people and their integration into the labour market. Through the promotion of the social and solidarity economy, the EU and ILO support the government of Tunisia to create [decent jobs for young people](#) in disadvantaged areas.

In Bangladesh, the [Skills 21](#) project builds on the achievements of previous EU-ILO initiatives to modernise the TVET system. It supports the Government's commitment to creating inclusive economic growth and full and productive employment for all. These efforts create an effective, demand-driven skills system that will meet the needs and aspirations of the people, especially the two million who enter the workforce every year.



Labour migration

As recognised by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the promotion of decent work in labour migration and of fair recruitment are critical to improving migration development outcomes, reducing labour migration costs and preventing forced labour and trafficking.

In partnership with IOM, the project “[Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa-THAMM](#)” aims to strengthen migrant workers’ protection mechanisms throughout the migration cycle, whether workers are leaving the region or seeking employment in the partner countries (Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia). In 2020, the project supported the training to the fair recruitment approach of over 50 top-level managers from relevant government entities across the three countries. The programme also provided technical assistance for the mainstreaming of labour migration in the Tunisian National Employment Strategy, in addition to the development of the Tunisian National Strategy for International employment and the Protection of migrant workers. Over 130 participants and 42 speakers took part in the first online THAMM regional conference in July 2021 on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on labour migration responses in European and North African countries. A research paper and a conference report can be consulted [here](#). Overall, ILO will support the production of 15 knowledge products and 14 technical assistance products in the three countries.

In Turkey, within the framework of the [Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan](#), the ILO supports the economic and social resilience of refugees (including Syrian refugees under Temporary



Protection and under international protection) and of host communities by providing livelihood opportunities, developing a competent labour force, and stimulating labour market demand through the local economy, business development and private sector engagement. It also supports labour market governance institutions and monitoring mechanisms for the integration of refugees into the labour market in line with the economic, sectorial, national and regional priorities of Turkey. As a result of the ILO’s interventions, refugees and host community members benefitted from skills development and livelihood programmes, were referred to decent and formal employment opportunities and supported through business development services and cooperatives in Turkey.

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