

This is a series of 26 easy-to-print factsheets highlighting how you as an EU citizen can benefit from EU policies in the areas of employment and social policy and pointing to future challenges and developments.

The factsheets are divided into six thematic areas:

- > [More and better jobs](#)
- > [Rights at work](#)
- > [Inclusion and equality](#)
- > [Job mobility](#)
- > [EU funding programmes](#)
- > [Policy in practice](#)

The top factsheet of each series explains the key, overarching ideas and policies of each theme and each sub-sheet gives details of specific policy areas.

The “Did you know” section provides interesting facts and figures relating to each topic area. At the end of each factsheet, there is a list of others that address related topics and might be of interest to you as well as several links where you can find more information.

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A More and better jobs

Delivering more and better jobs is a crucial part of maintaining and improving European prosperity and ensuring a sustainable future for you. Strong progress is being made: the EU employment rate, currently at 66%, has moved much closer to the overall goal of 70% by 2010 set at Lisbon, meaning that more and more people are in work. However, more work needs to be done as 20 million jobs will have to be created by 2010 if the target is to be reached.

Did you know?

Unemployment dropped significantly from 8.9% in 2005 to 8.2% in 2006 with almost all Member States contributing to this trend

About half of the Member States have developed or are developing comprehensive "flexicurity" approaches – a considerable improvement from only a handful in 2006

The employment situation varies significantly across Member States and each country has its own range of diverse and well-developed employment policies. However, many of the challenges at national level are common to all countries. Thus, by agreeing objectives, priorities and targets at EU level, the EU can help to coordinate national strategies for increased employment and to exchange best practice.

The EU seeks to attract more people to enter – and remain – in work through the

European Employment Strategy (EES), which plays a central role in coordinating EU policies to create more and better jobs. The EES is based on employment guidelines, agreed at EU level, setting out common priorities for Member States' employment policies.

Training and adaptability are critical factors in developing the EU's long-term potential for competitiveness and social well-being. The EU thus implements a comprehensive set of policies and strategies to improve the knowledge and skills of EU workers.

Dealing with change

The EU also promotes conditions for workers and companies to be able to adapt to change, stay on the job market and make progress in their working life through its "flexicurity" strategy. Flexicurity promotes a combination of flexible labour markets, work organisation and labour relations and a high level of employment and income security.

Anticipating change and helping prepare workers, regions and businesses for restructuring is another EU priority. The EU aims to enable you to cope with change and anticipate restructuring by helping those affected adapt and by helping you develop your skills and knowledge.

How do citizens benefit?

Since 1998, the EES has helped raise employment in the EU from 61.2% to 66% and cut unemployment from 9.3% to 7.2%. This way, more people have jobs and Europe's prosperity is boosted as a whole.

EU policies work to make it easier for you to find a job at every stage of your working life in a quickly changing economic environment. The EU's flexicurity approach aims to help you meet the challenges of a globalised and rapidly changing world. In addition, by improving your knowledge and skills, you can improve your employment and income opportunities.

EU policies also aim for you to be better able to anticipate and react to restructuring. By managing change better, living conditions

and quality of life can be improved more sustainably, which thus helps to create more and better jobs.

Another goal of the EU's policies for more and better jobs is to combat inequality and sustain our social protection systems. By getting more people into work, we can ensure that our societies cope with demographic change: we need more people of all ages in employment to finance spending on things like pensions as our population ages. Raising the skills and employability of workers also helps remove barriers that prevent people from entering the labour market, while training can help keep older workers active in the labour market.

Future developments and challenges

Particular challenges for the future will be creating more and better jobs for EU citizens by focusing on action in the above areas. Sustained effort is needed if we are to meet the EU's jobs targets for 2010. The EU will thus continue to coordinate and support Member States' actions in these fields with a view to ensuring progress throughout the EU.

In addition, the EU will look to anticipate and deal with demographic change, in particular by boosting the number of older workers. Other issues to address will be the increasing pace of change and globalisation, as well as protection of workers' rights and equal opportunities.

Links to other factsheets

For further information on specific topics under *More and better jobs*, please consult all the factsheets in series A.

- > [C4](#) Demographic change and the ageing population

Further information

- > DG Employment
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=81&langId=en>

A1 More and better jobs

Unemployment and quality in work

Tackling unemployment and boosting quality in work are major concerns for EU citizens and a crucial part of maintaining and improving European prosperity. The EU is making progress towards its employment target of having 70% of people aged 15–64 in jobs. But there remains scope for improvement. In addition, employment levels vary significantly across Member States, each of which has its own long-established and distinct employment policy.

Did you know?

Between 2000 and 2006, almost 12 million more people found jobs

Unemployment decreased from 9.0% in 2004 to 7.9% in 2006

Set up in 1997, the European Employment Strategy (EES) plays a central role in coordinating EU policies to create more and better jobs. *Quality in work* is a key element of a competitive and inclusive economy. A multi-faceted concept, it includes the composition of jobs and their qualification requirements; workers' profiles, their inclusion and access to the labour market, their skills and career development and their subjective job satisfaction; and work conditions; and equal opportunities.

The EES is based on employment guidelines setting out common priorities for Member

States' employment policies, agreed at EU level. Each Member State then draws up a programme describing how it will implement the guidelines nationally. The European Commission reviews progress on the implementation of the national programmes.

Exchanging good practice and experience is one of the core goals of the EES. The Mutual Learning Programme (MLP) thus seeks to encourage mutual learning at all levels and enhance transferability about the most effective policies. The MLP aims for national governments, social partners and other stakeholders to be fully involved in the EES.

Cooperation

Member States' economies are interdependent. We all need to work together to achieve economic reform, sharing policies that work. Cooperation and sharing experience at EU level mean a common and more effective approach to employment across the EU.

In addition, the EES provides strong support for creating and maintaining jobs at local

level as local authorities and social partners can best understand local conditions, aspirations and needs and are best placed to translate national and regional strategies into action on the ground. Initiatives are therefore undertaken at EU level to boost local employment development, in particular initiatives to enable stakeholders to discuss and exchange experience and information.

How do citizens benefit?

Since 1998, the EES has helped raise employment in the EU from 61.2% to 66% and cut unemployment from 9.3% to 7.2%. This way, more people have jobs and Europe's prosperity is boosted as a whole. Plus by getting more of you into work, we can ensure that our societies cope with demographic change: we need more people of all ages in employment to finance social spending as our population ages.

Quality in work has also increased, benefiting you by combating poverty linked to low pay, by raising skills, and by improving the conditions of part-time

employment. Due to its multi-faceted nature, boosting quality can have several advantages for you: you may have higher job satisfaction; better work/life balance and health and safety at work; and greater access to employment for example if you're a woman or older worker.

The EU-level network of national Public Employment Services helps to promote cooperation and exchange of information, to better match jobseekers and vacancies. The network seeks to enhance the implementation of the EES and the integration of the European labour market.

Future developments and challenges

Looking forward, the EU will continue to work towards reaching its employment targets: these include the aforementioned overall employment rate of 70%, together with goals of 60% for women and 50% for older workers.

A particular challenge for the future will be to reduce youth unemployment: a small but significant part of youth remains trapped in

temporary, often low-pay jobs from which they find it difficult to exit. Another group at risk are those youth who experience longer spells outside employment, education or training. Particular challenges for the future will be boosting the adaptability of workers and enterprises when it comes to tackling change and globalisation; and investing more – and more effectively – in citizens' skills and knowledge.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A2](#) Flexicurity
- > [A3](#) Training and adaptability
- > [C2](#) Fight against discrimination
- > [C4](#) Demographic change and the ageing population
- > [E](#) Policy in practice

Further information

- > European Employment Strategy
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=101&langId=en>

A2 More and better jobs

Flexicurity

Flexicurity is a policy that promotes a combination of flexible labour markets, work organisation and labour relations and a high level of employment and income security. An integral part of the European Employment Strategy, it strengthens the EU's Growth and Jobs agenda, which aims to reduce unemployment and create more and better jobs. Flexicurity involves moving from a 'job security' mentality to an 'employment/employability security' mentality. The EU thus promotes conditions for you to be able to adapt to change, enter or stay on the job market more easily and make progress in your working life.

Did you know?

76% of Europeans agree that lifetime jobs with the same employer are a thing of the past

76% also consider that being able to change easily from one job to another is a useful asset when finding a job nowadays

While globalisation and technological progress are beneficial for employment and growth, the change they bring requires quick responses from workers and businesses. Companies are under increasing pressure to adapt. Workers need to acquire new skills and company restructurings are becoming a fact of everyday life.

As a response to these changes, the EU flexicurity strategy focuses on promoting active labour market policies, motivating lifelong learning and training, improving support to jobseekers, and supporting equal opportunities for all and equality between women and men.

Common principles

As each Member State has a specific labour market situation and culture, flexicurity approaches should be tailored to the specific circumstances of each Member State. Nonetheless, all EU countries face common challenges.

In addition, in an EU internal market of some half a billion people and an increasingly globalised world, companies operate across borders so flexicurity is a cross-border issue. The EU has therefore proposed common

principles to help Member States establish and implement flexicurity strategies which take into account their own respective situations.

Such EU-level principles provide Member States with a common understanding of flexicurity and the challenges it aims to address, and enable the EU to coordinate and monitor the various strategies employed and promote exchange of best practice.

How do citizens benefit?

The EU's flexicurity approach aims to help you meet the challenges of a globalised and rapidly changing world. It is about developing flexible work arrangements whereby you can combine your work and private responsibilities, and where you can – potentially at least – have flexible working hours. It is also about giving both employers and employees a more flexible environment for changing jobs.

At the same time, flexicurity means employment security by keeping your skills up-to-date and developing your talents – with adequate unemployment benefits

if you were to lose your job for a period of time. EU policies aim for you to be able to easily find a job at every stage of your active life and to have good prospects for career development in a quickly changing economic environment.

Moreover, research has shown that the implementation of flexicurity leads to high employment and low unemployment rates. In addition, the social security dimension of the concept acts against poverty by seeking to promote more open, responsive and inclusive labour markets, while supporting gender equality.

Future developments and challenges

Given the individual needs and challenges faced by each Member State, flexicurity approaches will be customised from country to country. The European Commission will monitor and evaluate the extent to which Member States are developing comprehensive policy strategies covering the common principles of flexicurity.

The trust of European citizens and companies in future employment opportunities, in the development of skills and human resources, in decent work,

in a supportive business climate and in increased business potential needs to be further enhanced.

Active involvement of social partners is key to ensuring that flexicurity delivers benefits for all. It is also essential that all stakeholders involved are prepared to accept and take responsibility for change. The Commission encourages Member States to work with social partners with a view to including their approaches to flexicurity in their national policies.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A1](#) Unemployment and quality in work
- > [B2](#) Labour law
- > [C1](#) Gender equality and work/life balance
- > [C3](#) Social exclusion and poverty
- > [F2](#) Social dialogue

Further information

- > Flexicurity
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=102&langId=en>

A3 More and better jobs

Training and adaptability

Training and adaptability are critical factors in developing the EU's long-term potential for competitiveness and social well-being – all of you should benefit from the more and better jobs on offer. Improving workers' skills and adaptability is thus a priority of the European Employment Strategy. More EU employees are participating in training than before but the proportion remains low – only 9.6% of 25–64 year-olds take part in education and training. The EU aims to make it possible for European workers to be competitive internationally and promotes lifelong learning.

Did you know?

88% of citizens consider that regular training improves job opportunities, while one additional year of school or training increases an individual's salary over a lifetime by almost 10%

The number of citizens aged 25–64 who took part in education or training increased by 2.5 percentage points between 2000 and 2006

A highly skilled and adaptable workforce is important for technological progress and growth as it enhances countries' ability to create new technologies and absorb those first developed abroad. The knowledge and capabilities of workers are also directly linked to economic growth.

The EU has a comprehensive set of policies and strategies – at European, national and regional levels – to improve workers' knowledge and skills. For example, as an integral part of lifelong learning, continuing vocational training is a priority for the EU as it helps provide citizens with the skills needed in the labour market.

Specific programmes

The European Social Fund is the EU's main financial instrument for investing in people, helping them enhance their education and skills and improving their job prospects. Among others, it assists EU citizens by providing financial support for actions such as training and enhancing skills. For that purpose, the ESF invests €10 billion a year in all Member States and regions.

The EU's Lifelong Learning Programme comprises various educational and training initiatives. With a budget of nearly €7 billion for 2007–13, it enables citizens at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe.

Meanwhile, the European Qualifications Framework links countries' qualifications systems so that employers and educational institutions can more easily understand foreign candidates' qualifications. It seeks to promote citizens' mobility and facilitate their lifelong learning.

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund supports training for those made redundant due to changes in world economic patterns.

How do citizens benefit?

By improving your knowledge and skills, you can improve your employment and income opportunities. Furthermore, raising the skills and employability of workers helps remove barriers that prevent people from entering the labour market, while training can help keep older workers active in the labour market. It thus combats inequality and social exclusion, and sustains our social protection systems.

These policies help ensure that you acquire the skills necessary to learn and innovate in a new era of rapid change and learning, making European businesses more competitive.

Economic integration, rapid globalisation and technological progress mean that EU

workers must be able to respond to and manage the effects of change. Developing new skills helps you be adaptable to change and remain in employment, which is why training and adaptability are key parts of the EU's flexicurity strategy. Flexicurity is a policy that promotes a combination of flexible labour markets, work organisation and labour relations and a high level of employment and income security

The EU also aims to boost cooperation between businesses and workers and among employers, trade unions, civil society and training institutes. Action at EU level enables these links to be built, which can make training even more relevant and effective.

Future developments and challenges

One future challenge will be how to address the effects of an ageing population and the growing need to keep workers in the labour force.

With this in mind, the EU will continue to work to ensure that European workers are among the best in the world: well educated and trained, with the skills to meet the demands of the knowledge economy and to take it forward.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A1](#) Unemployment and quality in work
- > [A2](#) Flexicurity
- > [E1](#) European Social Fund
- > [E3](#) European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

Further information

- > Human capital and skills
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_analysis/human_en.htm
- > Lifelong learning
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/III/III_en.html
- > European Qualifications Framework
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html

A4 More and better jobs

Restructuring

Restructuring is not new but is becoming increasingly frequent – one in three employees works in a company that is less than 10 years old. Restructuring affects all companies regardless of their size. The EU looks to anticipate change and to help prepare workers, regions and businesses for managing the restructuring process. It therefore aims to enable you to cope with change and anticipate restructuring by supporting industrial, economic and social re-conversion of areas and the people affected by it and by helping you develop your skills and knowledge.

Did you know?

On average, while 10% of companies disappear each year, just as many are created

In recent decades, the distribution of EU workers across economic sectors has evolved: between 1977 and 2002, more than 44 million jobs were created in services compared with a loss of 7 and 7.5 million in industry and agriculture respectively

“Restructuring” is a specific type of industrial change, generally characterised by an abrupt process of adjustment to take account of general economic conditions. It can be distinguished from structural change which is a permanent process of development and adaptation in a given enterprise or sector. The EU has put in place legislation to help manage restructuring and protect workers, such as rules that determine what issues you – as worker – have to be informed and consulted about. It also takes anticipative actions such as studies and impact analyses of new policies.

In addition, it takes action to help anticipate and manage change in areas indirectly linked to employment: EU industrial and enterprise policy for example helps to create the conditions for long-term economic and technological development and facilitates the anticipation of change. Promoting a combination of flexible labour markets, work organisation and labour relations and a high level of employment and income security, the EU’s flexicurity strategy also seeks to promote conditions for you to be able to adapt to change, stay on the job market and make progress in your working life.

Taskforce and forums

A taskforce promotes convergence between the various EU objectives, policies and actions concerning restructuring, while the EU Forum on Employment and Restructuring monitors changes and ensures that the various initiatives are

properly dovetailed. Given that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute 99% of all businesses, the EU set up in 2007 a forum that focuses on restructuring affecting SMEs to highlight challenges and promote exchange of best practice.

How do citizens benefit?

Workers often feel threatened by restructuring but it can also be a positive force: it is a driving force for change, helping to increase productivity and the introduction of new technologies. EU legislation and policies aim for you to be better able to anticipate and react to restructuring. For example, EU rules require that if a company is taken over by another, the workers of the acquired company keep their employment contract with the new employer in the same conditions as before the acquisition. Managing change also underpins the sustainable improvement of living conditions and quality of life, and therefore helps to create more and better jobs.

You also benefit from the effects generated by EU funding, with support

focusing on anticipative actions and training. The European Social Fund for example funds schemes to help you enhance your education and skills, while the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund aims to support those made redundant due to changes in world economic patterns.

To complement these policies, the EU promotes strong *social dialogue*. Social dialogue is the dialogue between employers and trade unions and between them and the EU institutions. Social partners can help the EU – and therefore you – by developing ways of anticipating structural change, and given their special knowledge of particular sectors, they can alert EU institutions to relevant sectoral developments.

Future developments and challenges

The EU will continue to work to develop high-quality policies to enable changes to be anticipated, to develop workers' capacity for adaptation, and to involve them in the life of their business through an active partnership.

Particular challenges will include ensuring consistency between the various policies relevant to restructuring; taking a long-term perspective to guarantee that economic and social players can act effectively; and ensuring that all stakeholders can participate.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A2](#) Flexicurity
- > [E1](#) European Social Fund
- > [E3](#) European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
- > [F2](#) Social dialogue

Further information

- > Restructuring
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=103&langId=en>
- > European Monitoring Centre on Change
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/>
- > Consultative Commission on Industrial Change CCMI, EESC
http://eesc.europa.eu/sections/ccmi/index_en.asp

B Rights at work

Keeping workers safe and healthy is a top priority for the EU. It has taken measures to ensure you are protected on the job and common health and safety standards are set and followed by the Member States. Minimum standards established by the EU help to ensure that the employment market is open and workers have flexibility when it comes to work contracts. By passing legislation the EU has improved employee safety and reduced the number of accidents that happen on the job. The EU also works with social partners to make sure that workers' rights legislation addresses the most important issues in the most efficient manner possible.

Did you know?

The rate of fixed-term employment is growing, representing 14% of total employment in the EU-25
35% of workers feel their job puts their health at risk

Workers' rights are a very important area of European social policy and are one of the areas where the EU has taken the most action and had the most impact. It has greatly improved working conditions and ensured basic rights to workers, for

example, by limiting working hours, making working conditions safer, and ensuring compensation in case of injury. Because of EU legislation, workers are safer and treated more fairly.

Setting common standards

Member States need to meet common standards that have been set by the EU. Health and safety standards have been put into place to ensure worker safety and reduce the number of accidents and deaths caused by work-related accidents and illness.

Safety regulations have led to greater work productivity as workers can spend more time at work and less time at home recovering. This, in turn, benefits the European economy as employees who are working and not recovering generate more earnings.

Standards have also been set by the EU to give workers fair conditions. The European job market has evolved a great deal and there are more and more workers who do not have traditional full-time work contracts. For example, being able to sign a part-time or seasonal contract allows workers significant flexibility to spend time with family or take care of other obligations.

How do citizens benefit?

With EU legislation in the field of workers' rights, you are much safer on the job. Incidents of injury or death from work-related accidents have fallen considerably thanks to EU action. This has also helped to improve overall working conditions through standard working hours, minimum rights to breaks and days off and other benefits. Working conditions today are significantly more comfortable than they have been in the past.

In addition, you have a much higher degree of flexibility than you ever had before. With different types of contract, you have options and do not have to sign a full-time contract if it is not the best option for you. You also have greater flexibility when it comes to changing jobs, including the right to work abroad.

Future developments and challenges

The EU has done a great deal to ensure the rights of workers within its borders. However, the European job market is undergoing extensive change: workers are moving away from traditional work contracts, more and more people are entering the workforce and the European population is getting older. All of these changes need to be taken into account to ensure that workers remain fully protected for any inequities and other risks.

Workers also face different risks than they have in the past. Efforts need to be taken at the national and European level to

protect workers from new health threats – particularly those related to stress, harassment and violence at work. The *Community strategy 2007–12 on health and safety at work* outlines what should be done on all levels to ensure workers' safety amidst new and emerging risks.

The EU needs to ensure that health and safety standards are adopted at national level and fully enforced to make sure that workers are fully protected in every Member State.

Links to other factsheets

For further information on specific topics under *Rights at work*, please consult all the factsheets in series B.

- > [C5](#) Pensions
- > [C6](#) Health and long-term care

Further information

- > Labour law
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=157&langId=en>
- > Health and safety at work
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148&langId=en>

B1 Rights at work

Health and safety at work

Improving health and safety at work is a collective concern for the EU, Member States and you, for both humanitarian and economic considerations. A safe and healthy working environment is an essential element of the quality of work. Health and safety at work is now one of the most important and most highly developed aspects of EU policy on employment and social affairs based on Article 137 of the EC Treaty. Thanks to the adoption and application in recent decades of a large body of EU Directives, it has been possible to improve working conditions in the EU Member States and make considerable progress in reducing the incidence of occupational accidents and illnesses. Implementing health and safety legislation contributes to better public health and economic growth across the EU.

Did you know?

The number of fatal accidents in the workplace fell by 23% between 2000 and 2005 in the EU-15

The incidence rate (x100 000 workers employed) of accidents at work with more than three days' absence decreased from 100 to 83 (-17%) over the same period

The existing EU health and safety at work corpus of legislation has been developed with the aim of covering a maximum of risks with a minimum of legislation. A Framework Directive 89/391/EC lays down the main principles of prevention of occupational risks. Other Health & Safety Directives lay down minimum requirements for example, for workplaces, work equipments, the exposure to chemical, carcinogens, physical and biological agents, certain categories of workers, etc.

In 2007, the *EU 2007–2012 strategy on health and safety at work* was put forward, receiving positive support from both the European Parliament and Council. It aims to continue the good work that has been achieved so far while setting even more ambitious targets, such as a 25% reduction in the total number of accidents at work by 2012.

Role of Member States

It is essential that the Community *acquis* is implemented effectively in order to protect the lives and health of workers and ensure that the companies operating within the large European market are placed on an equal footing.

Better compliance with Community legislation will effectively contribute to reduce the number of accidents at work and occupational illnesses. In order to achieve this, the commitment of everyone must be reinforced, at both Community and national level.

In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission will ensure that the Community Directives are transposed and implemented effectively. It will assist Member States in this regard, but also exercise the utmost

vigilance and launch infringement proceedings where necessary, as it has in fact already done.

The Member States, for their part, are under an obligation to ensure the Community Directives are transposed and applied in national law.

The Senior Labour Inspectors Committee, consisting of representatives of the national labour inspection services, assists the European Commission with a view to improving cooperation between national enforcement bodies.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work provides information on health and safety at work, helping to explain EU legislation on this topic.

How do citizens benefit?

Through EU action in this area, you now experience better working conditions across the EU: safety at work is increased, health and safety occupational risks are assessed and protection measures are taken. Your entire well-being at work is taken into account, including both physical and psychosocial risks. In addition your employers know more on how they can make your workplace safer and you are more aware of the risks that you face and how you can manage them. Action at EU level means that you are protected by the same level of health and safety minimum requirements no matter which Member State you are working in.

Member States are allowed to maintain or adopt more protective measures.

In addition, you benefit from indirect advantages such as an increase in economic growth: the lack of effective protection to ensure health and safety at work can result in absenteeism due to workplace accidents and occupational illnesses. This has a major negative impact on the economy. EU legislation aims for citizens to spend less time recovering from work-related accidents and diseases. As a result, their hours of productivity are increased, which in turn helps boost economic growth.

Future developments and challenges

While the EU has made a great deal of progress, much work is still needed to make well-being at work a tangible reality for European citizens. The EU's *2007–12 strategy on health and safety at work* lays out much of what needs to be tackled in the coming years. Ensuring that EU legislation is adopted and fully implemented at national level remains a challenge. Greater cooperation between the EU and Member States is required to make sure that proper national regulations transposing EU Directives are in place and properly enforced.

Health and safety at work aspects need to be incorporated in national programmes at all levels of education and in all fields including vocational training and university education with a view to effectively develop an intrinsic prevention culture. Particular attention should be given to small and medium-sized companies that do not have the same resources as larger companies for implementing health and safety legislation.

Links to other factsheets

- > [B2](#) Labour law
- > [F2](#) Social dialogue

Further information

- > Health and safety at work
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=148&langId=en>
- > European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
<http://osha.europa.eu/>

B2 Rights at work

Labour law

Making great efforts to guarantee workers' rights, the EU has adopted legislation setting minimum labour standards that have to be met across all Member States. Moreover, EU labour law aims at ensuring that the freedom of the Single Market does not cause labour standards to deteriorate or make competition unfair. As the EU modernises labour law, you and your employer are given greater flexibility and you should enjoy greater employment security throughout your working life.

Did you know?

The number of people working under a contract different from the standard model, including self-employment, formed almost 40% of the EU-25 workforce in 2005

Part-time employment accounts for 18% of total employment

Working situations in Member States can be quite complicated as many workers are not considered to be fully integrated in the job market. This is due in part to the rise in different forms of employment, with part-time, fixed-term and agency work becoming increasingly common across Europe.

The EU has taken action to ensure that all workers are protected and benefit from similar rights, regardless of their location or type of employment. The EU also ensures that all Member States implement European labour law into their national legislation.

European cooperation

The EU has taken a leading role in bringing together all the stakeholders to discuss labour law. National governments, unions, labour organisations and other social partners have joined the EU to negotiate and agree on the best way to modernise

and develop labour law. As a result, the EU can ensure that all points of view are taken into account when addressing the future challenges of labour law and that Community legislation can fully meet the demands of the changing job market.

How do citizens benefit?

EU action in the field of labour law gives workers greater flexibility and reduces market segregation. Those who are unemployed or detached from the labour market have more opportunity to find work and can thus more easily integrate into the labour market.

As a worker, you are also given greater freedom regarding your working life. You now have a bigger choice than ever before when it comes to arranging working hours and career opportunities. EU legislation

ensures that you enjoy flexibility and are able to balance family life, work and education without being penalised in terms of your career.

Moreover, labour law ensures the rights of workers when they decide to change jobs or when the employer is unable to meet its financial obligations. Labour law further grants rights to workers to be informed and have a say regarding major issues relating to company life. This is especially true when a worker's job is at stake.

Future developments and challenges

The EU has made significant progress in the field of labour law, but there is still much to be done. The fight against undeclared work continues and the EU needs to increase its efforts to bring it to an end.

Further effort is also needed to make labour markets both more inclusive and more responsive to innovation and change. While many people are still not entirely

integrated into the labour market, non-traditional forms of employment remain to be fully recognised.

Increasing worker mobility is a key priority of the EU and labour law needs to be adapted to reflect this. Changing jobs or moving to a different country to work can still be a difficult and complicated process. Labour law needs to support workers' mobility in the EU.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A4](#) Restructuring
- > [B1](#) Health and safety at work
- > [D1](#) Removing barriers to job mobility
- > [F2](#) Social dialogue

Further information

- > Labour law and work organisation
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=157&langId=en>

C Inclusion and equality

The EU is working to address social exclusion, help ensure adequate social protection and promote an inclusive society based on equal opportunities. Progress has been made in areas achieving greater social well-being, but more needs to be done. It is not just a question of having laws but of guaranteeing equal opportunities in practice.

Did you know?

Women are paid on average 15% less than men

78 million Europeans, 19 million of whom are children, live at risk of poverty

Promoting equality and social inclusion is about making sure that everybody, including vulnerable groups, can play a full part in work and society and that they have an equal opportunity to do so.

The task has various aspects. One is to ensure equality between women and men, while helping people to establish an appropriate balance between home life and work. Fighting discrimination is also important, so that no person or group of persons is treated less favourably than another because of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Meanwhile, combating social exclusion and poverty – including child poverty – is another priority. This requires, for example, providing decent and affordable housing, addressing problems of homelessness and over-indebtedness, and pursuing active inclusion strategies to make sure that social policies mobilise people who are capable of working while providing a decent standard of living to those who are and will remain outside the labour market.

Another aspect is to anticipate and deal with demographic change – notably Europe's ageing population – while maintaining effective social protection systems such as adequate pensions and health and long-term care.

Nobody left out

The EU takes action on equality in a number of ways: through legislation, equal opportunities programmes, and by working to integrate gender and discrimination issues into all aspects of policy-making – a process known as *mainstreaming*.

On social exclusion and social protection, the EU looks to reinforce cooperation between Member States. It also supports programmes to raise awareness, such as the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All and the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

How do citizens benefit?

As an EU citizen you have the right to equal treatment and a life free of discrimination – this is enshrined in law and EU policies work to make sure it happens in practice. For instance, it is illegal under EU law to deny someone a job or access to training on grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

At the same time the EU is helping to make sure that the vulnerable in society are not left out in the cold. Europe's social protection reforms and social inclusion policies – coordinated and encouraged at EU level – seem to be paying off. For

example, employment rates have risen for older workers. Enabling older workers to enter or stay in employment is an important part of promoting equal opportunities for all ages, of helping people to remain active in later life – *active ageing* – and of addressing challenges posed by demographic change.

In fact, EU citizens stand to benefit from EU action on equality and social inclusion in a wide range of ways, as illustrated in more detail in the other factsheets in this series on the *Inclusion and equality* theme. The EU is working to improve the integration of people with disabilities, to name one example.

Future developments and challenges

Despite the progress to date, not all problems have yet been solved, and Europe constantly faces new social challenges. For example, women in the EU continue to earn 15% less than men overall, despite laws guaranteeing equal pay. Discrimination is still seen to be commonplace on grounds of ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation, for instance. And poverty continues to be an issue in Europe.

The EU will pursue and broaden its efforts to promote inclusion and equality. It will, for example, further reinforce inclusion and anti-discrimination policies. It will continue the fight against child poverty and will help to further open up the job market to older workers. And it will continue to encourage the provision of adequate health and long-term care – all with a view to ensuring equal opportunities for everyone.

Links to other factsheets

For further information on specific topics under *Inclusion and equality*, please consult all the factsheets in series C.

- > [F1](#) The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

Further information

- > DG Employment
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en>
- > Anti-discrimination
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=423&langId=en>

C1 Inclusion and equality

Gender equality and work/life balance

Women and men have equal rights in principle but gaps still exist in practice, notably on the labour market. The situation is improving but more needs to be done to put women and men on an equal footing. Meanwhile, juggling work and private life can be difficult for everyone, especially for women. Gender equality is a core EU value, and the EU works to promote it, along with initiatives to make it easier for both women and men to combine work and private life.

Did you know?

The employment rate for women was 58.3% in 2007 – 14.2 points lower than men (72.5%)

Women are paid on average 15% less than men for each hour worked

Women do not enjoy equality with men in a variety of respects. This is seen, for example, in the gaps between women and men in terms of employment and pay. Women continue to be under-represented in positions of responsibility and in certain professions or parts of the economy, like engineering and science, and a disproportionately high number are in part-time work. All this

despite the fact that women are, on average, better educated than men.

One among other factors explaining inequalities between women and men in the labour market is the imbalanced sharing of family responsibilities: women are still primarily responsible for housework and for caring for children and other dependants.

Promoting gender equality

The EU protects the right to equal treatment of women and men and supports activities to promote gender equality. The principles of equal treatment and gender equality are enshrined in the EU Treaty and have led to the development of specific legislation and policies in this area.

The EU is also funding initiatives and projects promoting gender equality, and is working to integrate gender issues into all aspects of policy-making – so-called *gender mainstreaming*. Indeed, gender equality forms part of the EU's Growth and Jobs agenda and its employment strategy, and social partners play an important role in promoting gender equality at work.

Equality bodies have been established in every EU Member State in order to provide information, responses and legal

advice to citizens on their equality rights. Furthermore, the European Institute for Gender Equality in Vilnius, Lithuania, will in the future provide expertise, improve knowledge and raise visibility of equality between men and women.

The importance of reaching a better balance between work and private life for both women and men is underlined in the priorities of the European Commission *Roadmap for equality between women and men* setting out actions for 2006–10. This priority is further stressed in the European Pact for Gender Equality reflecting EU Member States' determination to implement gender equality policies. A European Alliance for Families has also been established to foster family-friendly policies, in full respect of gender equality principles.

How do citizens benefit?

The EU has been a real engine for change on gender equality, and the situation of women has improved, including on the jobs market. Women have, for example, accounted for much of the employment growth in recent years in the EU.

The EU's comprehensive body of legislation on gender equality means that you are entitled to equal treatment in all areas relating to employment and work, such as pay, access to jobs, training, parental leave and social security. Moreover, EU legislation bans discrimination between women and men in the provision of goods and services.

The EU encourages policies contributing to a better work/life balance: for instance, the provision of suitable childcare facilities, as well as adequate parental leave and flexible forms of working arrangements that benefit both women and men alike. This can have a number of benefits in terms, for example, of sharing family responsibilities, access to jobs, civic and political participation, increased possibility to pursue a career, job satisfaction, or starting a family.

Future developments and challenges

The EU is committed to continued efforts to promote gender equality and help people reconcile work and family life. One task will be to ensure the proper implementation and enforcement of gender equality legislation. More generally, achieving equality between women and men will involve tackling social and cultural stereotypes as well as raising awareness among men and encouraging them to take on more family responsibilities.

A particular priority is to create more and better jobs for women: this means, for example, addressing the gap between women's and men's pay, continuing to develop flexible work arrangements for both women and men, and providing more quality childcare and other services.

Links to other factsheets

- > [B2](#) Labour law
- > [C2](#) The fight against discrimination
- > [C4](#) Demographic change and the ageing population

Further information

- > Gender equality
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=418&langId=en>
- > Women and men in decision-making
ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm
- > European Alliance for Families
ec.europa.eu/employment_social/families/index_en.html

C2 Inclusion and equality

The fight against discrimination

One of the fundamental values of the EU is that all of its citizens should be able to enjoy a life free from discrimination. Yet discrimination still exists in many forms and different walks of life. Legislation protects you against it, but laws alone are not enough: the EU is therefore working to create conditions in which everyone, in practice, can enjoy equal treatment.

Did you know?

Discrimination is widespread, according to many Europeans: nearly two thirds (64%) think it is widespread concerning ethnic origin, and half or more think so for disability (53%) and sexual orientation (50%)

Discrimination occurs if a person or group of persons are treated less favourably than others because of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. In other words, discrimination means treating people differently, negatively or adversely without a good reason, either directly or indirectly.

The fight against discrimination has various aspects. These include tackling discrimination per se by making sure, for example, that nobody is unfairly treated

in terms of access to jobs and training. More broadly, anti-discrimination is closely related to activities like promoting equal opportunities by, for instance, making it easier for disabled people to enter or remain in employment. Social inclusion – enabling vulnerable groups to be fully involved in society – has a big part to play.

As well as being important in its own right, fighting discrimination will lead to a more inclusive society and labour market, which is vital for delivering growth and jobs.

Dealing with discrimination

The EU takes action on discrimination in a variety of ways: through legislation, funding and by encouraging exchange of ideas and good practice. An important element is the support given to EU-level civil society networks on the different discrimination grounds as well as support to cooperation at EU level between national Equality Bodies. The EU also runs an awareness-raising campaign called "For Diversity, Against Discrimination".

Discrimination is addressed in social dialogue held at EU level between employers' and workers' representatives, while a specific action plan and strategy on disability looks to ensure that disability issues are taken into account in all aspects of policy-making. The EU promotes equal opportunities and social inclusion more generally through its employment strategy and other initiatives.

How do citizens benefit?

It is illegal under EU law to deny someone a job or access to training on grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation – a job advertisement saying, for example, “no older people or women need apply” is not permissible. EU law also protects you against harassment or victimisation on the above grounds. The rules on gender and racial discrimination go further and additionally cover access to healthcare, goods and services and housing, so that, for instance, you could not be denied medical treatment on account of your racial background.

As an EU citizen, you have various possibilities to take action to enforce your rights if you feel that you have been discriminated against. Victims of discrimination can take their cases before national courts. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms may also be available, such as administrative proceedings before equality bodies and conciliation. Meanwhile, help is provided by national bodies set up for the promotion of equal treatment on the basis of race or ethnic origin. And anti-discrimination associations or organisations must be allowed to help victims of discrimination in court.

Future developments and challenges

Activities at EU level, supporting national efforts, have done much to make discrimination a thing of the past – but further efforts are needed. There are a range of challenges to face in this respect. For one thing, we have to continue to make sure that anti-discrimination legislation is properly implemented, so that what is said on paper is the reality in practice.

Ultimately, eliminating discrimination is a question of changing behaviour and mentalities, of raising awareness about the issues and of tackling the underlying causes of inequality. We will have to adapt, for example, to the fact that European society is changing, that it is growing older and becoming more diverse, if we are to ensure that all Europeans can live free of discrimination.

Links to other factsheets

- > [B2](#) Labour law
- > [C1](#) Gender equality and work/life balance
- > [F1](#) The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

Further information

- > Action against discrimination
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=423&langId=en>
- > Social inclusion
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=437&langId=en>
- > 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All
equality2007.europa.eu
- > “For Diversity. Against Discrimination” campaign
www.stop-discrimination.info

C3 Inclusion and equality

Social exclusion and poverty

Making sure that every citizen is part of society is vital for Europe's prosperity and quality of life. Even though EU countries have some of the most developed social protection systems in the world, too many Europeans are still not able to participate fully in society and the economy. Millions are at risk of poverty, for example. The EU combats social exclusion and poverty by helping its Member States to work together and to share experiences on the action they take.

Did you know?

Some 78 million Europeans live at risk of poverty, 19 million of whom are children

Around 23.5 million people in the EU survive on €10 a day, and 7 million on €5 a day

Combating social exclusion means promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups and tackling discrimination in all spheres of life, including on the jobs market. *Active inclusion* strategies have an important part to play, to make sure that social policies mobilise people who are capable of working while providing a decent standard of living to those who are and will remain outside the labour market.

Meanwhile, appropriate social protection and support services are needed to address, for example, homelessness, health problems

and over-indebtedness. This involves providing decent and affordable housing, accessible and good quality healthcare and financial services, and secure and adequate pensions. At the same time, eradicating poverty involves breaking a vicious circle that can often see poverty passed on from generation to generation – a trap that can be difficult for people to escape.

In short, promoting social inclusion is vital to achieve the EU's goals of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Social protection, social inclusion

The EU takes action against social exclusion through the *Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process*. This sees the EU coordinate and encourage Member States' efforts to combat social exclusion and poverty, and to reform their social protection systems, on the basis of shared experience. The EU is also committed to fighting poverty under its

Growth and Jobs agenda. The added value of action at EU level is to develop common EU-wide objectives and approaches that Member States implement by means of national action plans. Meanwhile, EU funding is made available for activities aiming to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion.

How do citizens benefit?

Action at EU level has raised awareness and helped to move social exclusion and poverty up the policy agenda. It has encouraged Member States to improve their performance in different areas and helped them to exchange ideas. The EU has also created a sound basis for policy-making by involving a range of actors such as non-governmental organisations, social partners and local and regional authorities, as well as those affected by poverty and those working with people in poverty.

So, for those who feel excluded from society or trapped by poverty, the EU is helping to improve social conditions in general and also, therefore, their life chances. There are many people who stand to benefit. To name just a few examples, you might be on a low-paid job or unemployed and finding it difficult to find affordable housing; you might have a disability or be from an ethnic minority and struggling to get job training; or you might be a child whose parents can't afford to buy the things you need for school.

Future developments and challenges

Social policies in Europe must continue to find and support new responses to the particular needs of specific groups. This involves not only addressing existing sources of exclusion and poverty but also anticipating potential risks and change, such as the ageing of Europe's population, the effects of globalisation, and the need for people to have access to information technologies. Dealing with child poverty, unemployment, homelessness, discrimination and debt are just some of the ongoing challenges, along with integration of people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and immigrants.

The EU already has an eye on the future: it has set itself the target of making a decisive impact on eradicating poverty by 2010 – the year that will also be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The Year will aim to raise awareness of the way poverty continues to blight the daily lives of so many Europeans. It will, among other things, emphasise that we all have a part to play in tackling social exclusion and poverty, and that real progress requires a long-term commitment from all actors and levels of policy-making.

Links to other factsheets

- > [C2](#) The fight against discrimination

Further information

- > Social protection
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=443&langId=en>

C4 Inclusion and equality

Demographic change and the ageing population

The EU's population is getting older and growing more slowly – or even declining, in particular in some regions. This has significant implications for employment, health, long-term care and social protection as well as for matters like urban planning, the environment, services, and information and communication technologies. The EU is working with its Member States to tackle the demographic challenge as part of its strategy for economic growth, jobs and social well-being. Good planning now is vital for your sustained prosperity in future.

Did you know?

The old age dependency ratio – the population over 60 relative to the working age population – is projected to double by the year 2050

By the year 2050 the population of the EU is expected to have declined from its current 493 million inhabitants to 472 million

The ageing of the population is the result of decreased birth rates combined with increased longevity, a trend that is observable elsewhere but particularly marked in Europe. Demographic change means that society has to adapt and modernise in a variety of areas, including job markets, social protection systems, retirement arrangements and pensions, health and care, work/life balance, migration policy and education.

Promoting equal opportunities for all ages and encouraging active ageing are particularly important because they make it easier for older people to get or retain jobs and to work – and to stay active and be involved in society – for longer. Indeed, active ageing is an overall strategy reflecting a life-cycle approach to work with implications for employment, social affairs and lifelong learning. It is not only about employment and the job market – civic engagement and volunteering are also areas where older people can make an important contribution.

Adapting to change

The EU helps Member States to develop policies to bring about demographic 'renewal', to promote employment and productivity, and to integrate migrants. It does so by encouraging exchange of experience and research, and by monitoring and reporting on demographic trends.

A number of EU tools and initiatives support this work: the European Demographic Forum and Group of Experts, the biennial Demography Report, the European Observatory on the Social Situation and Demography, and the European Alliance for Families.

How do citizens benefit?

Demographic change has an impact on issues that matter to us throughout our lives. You may not give it much thought when you're just a teenager, but when you're a bit older and you and your partner are looking to start a family, you'll want to know that you can rely on good childcare and health facilities, with flexible work arrangements so you can balance work and family life. When your kids leave home, you'll want them to have decent, affordable housing. Then, approaching retirement, you'll probably want to remain

active for as long as possible, perhaps by doing some voluntary work, or learning a new skill, or travelling. You'll need to have suitable access to transport and other services. And to be able to care for your elderly relatives or partner as they become frail, you'll need an adequate pension and affordable care options.

Fortunately, the policies that the EU is helping to put in place mean you should be able to look to the future with confidence, however young or old you are.

Future developments and challenges

The ageing of the population presents both challenges and opportunities. Dealing with demographic change requires solidarity and collaboration between the generations and continued cooperation at a European level.

Key areas where ongoing efforts are needed to adapt to demographic change include: giving more support to families and potential parents and promoting greater gender equality; making full use of Europe's human resources potential, notably through active ageing; boosting productivity and

adapting our economy to the changing needs of an ageing society; receiving and integrating migrants into our labour market and society; and maintaining sound public finances so as to safeguard the long-term sustainability of social protection systems.

The EU has also set itself two benchmarks to be reached by 2010 related to active ageing: an employment rate for older workers (54–65 years old) of 50%, and an average retirement age of 64.9 years (five more than in 2000).

Links to other factsheets

- > [C3](#) Social exclusion and poverty
- > [F1](#) The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

Further information

- > Demography and the social situation in the EU
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=500&langId=en>
- > European Alliance for Families
ec.europa.eu/employment_social/families/index_en.html

C5 Inclusion and equality

Pensions

Pensions are a great concern for the EU and its citizens. The risk of pensioner poverty has become more common and the EU is working to ensure that pensions are sufficient to provide income and financial security to older citizens. Sustaining pensions, however, has become more complicated with increased life expectancy – as you live longer, the proportion of life you spend in employment decreases, making it more difficult to provide adequate pensions for everyone. Nonetheless, the EU has sought to make working longer more desirable and to ensure that you do not lose your pension entitlements if you change jobs or move to another Member State.

Did you know?

The employment rate for workers between the ages of 55 and 64 has risen from 37% in 2000 to 45% in 2007

Without ongoing reform, by 2050 the proportion of people aged over 75 living at risk of poverty could reach 30% or more

The EU is working with Member States to ensure the sustainability of pension systems. Part of this entails encouraging citizens to work longer. The longer workers stay active in the labour market, the more they contribute to social security schemes and the higher benefits they receive

after retirement. The EU also encourages exchange of information on pension systems across Member States. Sharing of best practices can help build financially sustainable systems and encourage mobility as workers will worry less whether they will receive a pension after retirement.

Portability of pensions

The EU has proposed a Portability of Pensions Directive which aims to guarantee that pensioners do not lose any part of their pension if they change jobs or move to another country.

Portable pensions ensure that citizens who are mobile will not be at risk of poverty after retirement.

The portability of pensions is a key element in promoting worker mobility. If workers are assured of receiving the same level of pension if they change jobs or countries, they are more likely to become mobile. Meanwhile, promoting worker mobility is one of the key goals of the EU as it supports further integration and works to reduce unemployment. The Directive on Portability of Pensions is waiting to be integrated to national systems.

How do citizens benefit?

With the implementation of the Portability of Pensions Directive, you will be able to change jobs or move across borders without worrying about your pension. The goal is to guarantee a pension for every worker regardless of whether he or she changed jobs or moved abroad.

The reform of pension schemes should aim at sustainable and adequate pensions despite demographic change and pensioners' mobility. With the demographic shift, fewer

people contribute to social security schemes and more people receive benefits. Reforms should ensure that the elderly will not suffer from pensioner poverty and that pension schemes are sustainable, covering everyone to an adequate level.

Reforms also improved employment rates for older workers. Pension reforms are part of active inclusion measures. These measures help excluded people to join the labour market and create incentives to work longer.

Future developments and challenges

To ensure the adequacy and sustainability of pension systems, work still needs to be done. To respond to population changes, the EU and Member States should make effort to encourage older workers to remain in the workforce for longer.

Due to demographic change the strain on public pension schemes is going to increase. To ensure the sustainability of pensions, private schemes have to be used more. The right balance between public and private funds needs to be determined so that neither system becomes overburdened and incapable of providing pensions.

Links to other factsheets

- > [D1](#) Job mobility
- > [D2](#) Your social security rights
- > [C4](#) Demographic change and the ageing population

Further information

- > Providing adequate and portable pensions
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/pensions_en.htm

C6 Inclusion and equality

Health and long-term care

Access to medical and social care is one of your basic rights. Income or wealth should have no influence on whether or not you are able to receive care. Moreover, costs stemming from medical care should not create poverty. As the population of Europe ages, the need for long-term care increases. As such, long-care plans need to be further developed and updated so that the increased demand for care can be fully accommodated. The EU is working to improve health and long-term care and erase the lingering inequalities that exist in the level of care received across Member States and socio-economic lines.

Did you know?

The segment of the population aged over 80 in the EU will increase by 57% between 2010 and 2030, creating higher demand for long-term care

On average, 26% of European GDP was spent on social protection

Providing healthcare and long-term care falls within the competence of Member States. Consequently, the EU does not interfere in the design of national health care and long-term care systems. Nevertheless, the EU brings benefits to all EU citizens in the field of healthcare.

Your health has an impact on every aspect of your life. It can be a key determinate of life chances – the ability to do well in school, to find a good job, to advance in your career. Social protection can ensure that everyone has access to health care – even those who are the most difficult to reach, such as the disadvantaged people who often need

support but do not seek it. To make sure everyone has access to proper health care, the EU is working with Member States and coordinates reforms that modernise national health-care systems.

Increased demand for long-term care has created a strain on existing health-care schemes. Private insurance plans are becoming more widely used. The EU is working to strike a proper balance between public and private long-term care funding to ensure no one system becomes overburdened and that no one in need of care is overlooked.

European health insurance card

The European health insurance card makes receiving care much easier when travelling to another Member State or Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland or Switzerland. The card guarantees your right to receive treatment

abroad and simplifies necessary procedures required before receiving treatment. With the card, any fees you have to pay upfront will be reimbursed. All EU citizens are entitled to the European health insurance card.

How do citizens benefit?

Coordination between Member States and sharing of best practices has great potential to improve your access to health and long-term care.

Its goal is to reduce inequalities in health-care treatment along socio-economic lines and across borders, so that all citizens can take advantage of higher-quality health and long-term care.

Future developments and challenges

The EU needs to continue its work and assist Member States with their choices on the future design of healthcare systems. In particular, health-care resources should be managed more carefully. As demand for care is only going to increase as EU citizens age, the demand for caregivers also increases. It also needs to be assured that medical professionals are working in such a manner to ensure they can help the most people possible without impacting the level of care.

While inequalities in access to health care have been greatly reduced, work is still needed in this area. Inequalities can be

further decreased by tackling key risk factors through health promotion and reducing certain diseases that affect the poorer segments of society. Moreover, prevention activities need to be increased so the need for care is reduced in the future.

In addition, work should continue in combating inherent social inequalities which are often the root cause of uneven health care. Poverty reduction and social integration policies need to continue and be strengthened. Decreases in social inequality decrease health-care inequality.

Links to other factsheets

- > [D2](#) Your social security rights
- > [C4](#) Demographic decline and the ageing population

Further information

- > Health and long-term care
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/health_and_lt_care_en.htm
- > European health insurance card
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_security_schemes/healthcare/index_en.htm

D Job mobility

In today's world, worker mobility is increasingly important. People have the right to move freely within Europe, the global economy is becoming more and more competitive and our populations are ageing. To help bring about a true European labour market, the EU is aiming to make it easier for you to move between jobs and countries and still be assured of receiving benefits and pensions. Even with mobility on the rise, you may still find many obstacles to moving abroad such as legal and administrative uncertainties or language barriers.

Did you know?

7.2% of Europeans moved house in 2002

Only 18% of workers in the EU changed job in the last 12 months

Job mobility has traditionally been very low in Europe – both in terms of moving between different jobs and moving geographically to take up work in another region or country in Europe. However, citizens are becoming more aware of the opportunities to live and work abroad. Many are quite comfortable with this idea: most young people in the EU accept that they will most likely need to go abroad for work reasons, even if only for a short period. Now the EU and Member States need to

work together to make it more feasible for citizens who are open to the idea of going abroad to actually do so.

The EU has passed legislation to coordinate social security schemes across Member States. Workers should also receive pensions and social security benefits regardless of whether they change jobs or work in a different country. Workers can thus be more mobile when they know their pensions and social security will not be put at risk.

Promoting mobility

A mobile workforce holds many benefits for Europe. Mobility helps reduce unemployment as workers can move easily to different regions and countries in a Europe-wide job market. The economy also benefits as employers are better able to fill vacancies and people build new skills.

The EU aims to provide citizens with as much information as possible about

mobility. The European job mobility portal – EURES – provides citizens with access to job postings across all Member States and allows you to place your CV online for employers to access directly. The EURES network of specialist mobility advisers also offer practical information about working abroad, such as pension rights and social security abroad.

How do citizens benefit?

You have the right to work anywhere in Europe and still receive benefits such as pensions, social security and health care. Mobility also increases the chances of finding employment as you have the right to work in every Member State of the EU, expanding your job search beyond your home country. Working abroad helps to build new skills which can be beneficial for future employment, such as foreign languages and intercultural skills.

Workers can move abroad much more easily now than in the past. Administrative procedures have been streamlined and the process for claiming pensions or receiving health care is much simpler. In addition, it is easier to change job or move country. Initiatives such as EURES and the EU Job Days give direct access to information about working abroad as well as job vacancies from all over Europe.

Future developments and challenges

Worker mobility has increased recently but the EU and Member States need to continue to promote mobility. Member States should further streamline administrative practices so that moving abroad is not seen as a hassle or overly complicated. The EU's 2007 Job Mobility Action Plan calls for Member States to take action in all of these areas as well as encouraging them to make job-to-job and geographic mobility part of national employment strategies.

Member States should also continue to coordinate policies and share best practices.

Mutual learning schemes for mobility action can be used to help them coordinate and share information about mobility and improve mobility strategies.

There remains a lack of information about mobility across Europe. More studies and surveys are needed to better understand the mobility of European workers. Such information can be employed to better target mobility strategies and make them more effective.

Links to other factsheets

For further information on specific topics under *Job mobility*, please consult all the factsheets in series D.

- > [A2 Flexicurity](#)

Further information

- > Free movement of workers
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=25&langId=en>
- > European Job Mobility Portal
<http://eures.europa.eu>

D1 Job mobility

Removing barriers to job mobility

Free movement of workers is one of the basic freedoms guaranteed to you by the EU. In principle, every citizen has the right to work and live in another Member State without being discriminated against on grounds of nationality. This mobility is a key factor in boosting the European economy. It is also important for the creation of new and better jobs across the EU. However, mobility is still limited by various problems such as costs, administrative procedures and – though there has been progress – acceptance of qualifications abroad, to name a few.

Did you know?

Only 2% of citizens of working age live and work in another Member State

Over 70% of young workers believe that their career will require some form of mobility

Job mobility means moving from job to job, or moving from one Member State to another for a job. Free movement of workers in the EU means that in principle you have the right to take a job in any Member State. You can reside there for that purpose and you have the right to be treated equally, for example in terms of access to employment and working conditions. For newer Member States, some restrictions may apply.

Greater worker mobility is extremely beneficial to the EU and its economy. It widens the pool of talent that companies have at their disposal when recruiting, and it promotes further European integration by bringing people from different Member States together.

More mobility

The European Job Mobility Action Plan promotes worker mobility within the EU. It outlines steps to improve legislation and administrative practices in order to make working abroad easier. Policy support is required at all levels, and Member States play a significant role in promoting both job-to-job and cross-border mobility. Increasing public awareness of job mobility is also a key part of the Action Plan.

Meanwhile, the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES) also helps to facilitate the free movement of workers around the EU. Accessible in 25 European languages, it is a one-stop shop providing information about job mobility and it typically has over 1.5 million job postings available online for positions all over Europe. A network of over 750 advisors provides personalised assistance to those who have questions regarding worker mobility.

How do citizens benefit?

EU regulations make cross-border and job-to-job mobility much easier. It is your right to move across borders to look for employment and to bring your family with you. This process is much easier for EU citizens than for people from outside the EU who would like to work there, and who would generally need to obtain a work permit to be able to do so.

Europeans, with the help of services such as EURES, can now find employment – within or outside their own Member State – with fewer difficulties than before. You can also more easily see what opportunities exist across the EU before making the decision to move.

Finding employment abroad is simpler due to the EU's efforts to ensure the

mutual recognition of qualifications so that certification valid in one country is also valid in all EU countries. In addition, administrative processes are more streamlined. Whether changing jobs in the same country or moving to a new country, the EU is making the process easier and more harmonised across all Member States.

If you move to another Member State for work and feel your rights are not respected by the national authorities of the Member State where you work, depending on the circumstances you can either seek redress before the national authorities, address a complaint to the European Commission, or seek assistance through the SOLVIT system or through the Citizens Signpost Service.

Future developments and challenges

Despite the progress made to date, there are still obstacles to increasing European worker mobility. Many citizens are unaware of their mobility options. The EU and Member States need to work together to educate people and encourage greater worker mobility. EURES needs to produce more concrete actions such as European Job Days, linking with other employment networks and sharing of good practices.

Lifelong learning programmes need to be encouraged, particularly for sciences and information and communication technology, to give workers the necessary skills and knowledge needed when seeking to change jobs or cross borders. Another challenge will be to integrate newer Member States into the wider EU labour market.

Links to other factsheets

- > [B2](#) Labour law
- > [D2](#) Your social security rights

Further information

- > Free movement of workers
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=25&langId=en>
- > European Job Mobility Portal <http://eures.europa.eu>
- > SOLVIT http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index_en.htm
- > Citizens Signpost Service
http://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/front_end/index_en.htm

D2 Job mobility

Your social security rights

Ensuring you are not deprived your social security rights when moving within the EU is a key concern for EU employees. The EU is thus working to guarantee that social security schemes are coordinated across Member States. Through such coordination, the EU aims to ensure that everyone is treated like the citizens of the country where they work or reside. By making the process of collecting social security benefits simpler and creating continuity across Member States, worker mobility is made significantly easier.

Did you know?

There are currently over 600 000 mobile workers in the EU

Coordinating social security schemes

Social security schemes in the EU have been successfully coordinated for decades. Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72 address many of the social security issues that arise from workers and their families who move to another Member State: what country is responsible for social security benefits, who meets the costs for necessary healthcare during a trip in another EU country, etc. These regulations coordinate the many national social security policies and ensure that workers are not discriminated against compared to the citizens of the country where they work or reside. Member States

are allowed to determine the details of their own social security schemes – benefits, eligibility, etc. – as long as the basic principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination are respected.

The EU has taken steps to make citizens aware of their social security rights. Such programmes as EULisses provide people with relevant information about social security regimes across the EU so they fully understand the situation both at home and abroad and can be aware of the benefits they deserve no matter where they are living.

Modernising the exchange of data

The EU is working to improve the exchange of information between Member States. Regulation 833/2004 will implement the electronic exchange of data in the field of social security coordination. Modernisation of data exchange will enable simpler procedures and greater

coordination between Member States. When a worker moves to a new country, their social security and other information will be easily accessible by the relevant authorities in the new country, further encouraging worker mobility by facilitating administrative procedures.

How do citizens benefit?

EU action in the field of social security rights aims for you to be treated equally if you move to another Member State. Claiming your social security benefits is now easier thanks to the EU coordination of social security systems and information available to citizens. With electronic exchange of information, the most accurate and up-to-date information is available about individuals' social security situation better ensuring they are granted the appropriate benefits.

The EU also ensures the portability of statutory pensions. You can collect pensions from various countries while living in another country, depending on the amount of time you have worked in each country. No one can be denied their pension even if they leave the country where the pension is from.

Future developments and challenges

While much progress has been made in the field of coordination of social security schemes, further improvement can still be achieved. For example, current regulations need to be evaluated to determine if they need to be adapted in light of changing worker mobility patterns such as shorter or more frequent mobility.

Work also needs to continue to make access to information easier. Projects providing access to information are a great tool for promoting mobility and ensuring citizens understand their social security rights.

Links to other factsheets

- > [C5](#) Pensions
- > [D1](#) Removing barriers to job mobility

Further information

- > Coordination of social security schemes
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=26&langId=en>
- > Cost of healthcare abroad
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_security_schemes/healthcare/index_en.htm
- > Eulisses (EU links and information on social security)
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_security_schemes/eulisses/jetspeed/

E EU funding programmes

EU funding for employment and social policy is primarily focused on three funds: the European Social Fund (ESF), the PROGRESS programme for employment and social solidarity and the European Globalisation adjustment Fund (EGF). Each has its own remit and conditions. Member States are primarily responsible for employment and social policy. EU funding in these fields thus aims to support and complement – rather than substitute – national efforts.

Did you know?

Each year, the ESF helps some 2 million unemployed or inactive people, 200 000 socially excluded or disadvantaged people and 1.2 million unemployed or inactive women move into employment after benefiting from an ESF project. It also trains 4 million people

To date, the EGF has helped 7 337 people made redundant because of changing global trade patterns.

The ESF was set up to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across the EU and thus advance economic and social well-being. The ESF supports projects that promote employment and help citizens enhance their education and skills, improving their job prospects. The EU's employment and social solidarity programme for 2007–13, PROGRESS aims to strengthen the EU's support to Member States to achieve the Social Agenda – more and better jobs and a more cohesive society. The EGF works to combat the potential negative effects of globalisation and to reconcile economic growth and social cohesion.

For each project with EU funding, there must be a national counterpart to EU financial support, which may be covered by public or private sources, for example a national authority. In most cases, Member States and the EU share the management of the funds: while actions are designed at EU level, they are implemented by national or regional authorities. In others, programmes are directly managed at European level.

How do they differ?

While the funds work alongside each other, they also differ: the ESF invests in the implementation of employment and social inclusion policies in the Member States by supporting activities that might not otherwise be possible. In addition, transnational and inter-regional cooperation has long been a successful feature of ESF activities.

PROGRESS is targeted more at the policy level, with activities designed to inform

policy analysis and development. Both the ESF and PROGRESS consist of multi-annual programmes in support of strategic, long-term goals.

The EGF however differs in that it is targeted at on-the-ground activities that benefit workers and companies and is a response to a specific, European-scale crisis. It provides one-off, time-limited support, geared directly to helping workers who have suffered trade-related redundancies.

How do citizens benefit?

People in Europe benefit from EU action in this field both directly – via training and other support schemes – and indirectly – through Member States' improved policies and implementation of EU legislation. Ultimately the funds aim for the European social model to be modernised while more and better jobs and greater social cohesion are created.

The EU generally provides financial support in the social and employment fields either through buying services such as research studies, or through the granting of subsidies. In some cases, funding may be granted via a call for tender or proposals, published on the European Commission's website.

You can benefit in a variety of ways from ESF funding: training or guidance to enhance your skills and career prospects; support to help you set up a company or to find a

better balance between work and family; and assistance for women, older workers and other groups regarding access to the job market.

You will ultimately benefit from PROGRESS as Member States will promote laws, policies and practices in line with EU and national social goals. And EU and national policy/decision-makers and other stakeholders will be in a better position to meet the challenges of a social Europe in a globalised world.

The EGF aims to retain workers in, or reintegrate workers into, the labour market. If needed, you could therefore benefit from personalised support services such as job-search assistance, career guidance, outplacement assistance, tailor-made training and retraining and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Future developments and challenges

The EU is committed to ensuring that funding is used to contribute to the targets for the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs – in particular, an employment rate of 70% by 2010. In addition, funding should deliver real results for EU citizens.

Measures have therefore been put in place to monitor and evaluate their performance and ensure that they meet their objectives.

Links to other factsheets

For further information on specific topics under *EU funding programmes*, please consult all the factsheets in series E.

- > [E1](#) The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

Further information

- > Funding
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=86&langId=en>

E1 EU funding programmes

European Social Fund

The EU's main financial instrument for investing in people, the European Social Fund (ESF) promotes employment and helps people enhance their education and skills, improving their job prospects. It is a key element of the EU's Growth and Jobs agenda, which aims to promote economic growth, foster competitiveness and create jobs. Over the period 2007–13 more than €75 billion will be invested in the EU Member States and regions under the ESF.

Did you know?

The level of ESF funding differs from one region to another depending on their relative wealth

The ESF represents nearly 10% of the EU budget while around 9 million workers benefit from ESF support every year

As the oldest of the EU Structural Funds, the ESF was set up in 1957 to reduce unemployment across EU Member States and regions and thus promote economic and social well-being. It is organised under two broad objectives: the *convergence objective* includes all EU regions with a gross domestic product per head below 75% of the EU average, while the *regional competitiveness and employment objective* covers all other regions.

Throughout the EU, the ESF provides support for four key areas under both objectives. It works to increase the adaptability of workers and companies and enhance citizens' access

to employment. It aims to reinforce *social inclusion* – enabling vulnerable groups to be fully involved in society – by combating discrimination and facilitating access to jobs for disadvantaged people. It also promotes partnership for reform in the fields of employment and inclusion.

In addition, in the least prosperous regions and Member States that fall under the *convergence objective*, the ESF supports efforts to expand and improve investment in workers' knowledge and skills, and action aimed at developing institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations, at national, regional and local level.

The ESF in practice

The ESF is guided by the European Employment Strategy, which plays a central role in coordinating EU policies to create more and better jobs. ESF funding is available through the Member States and regions. Each Member State or region agrees an operational programme with the European Commission which sets out the priorities and goals of ESF funding for a seven-year period, with the current one being 2007–13.

For each ESF project there must be a national counterpart to EU financial support, which contribution may be covered by public or private funding – known as the *co-financing principle*. Member States and the EU share the management of the ESF: while ESF actions are designed at EU level, they are implemented by national or regional authorities.

How do citizens benefit?

Everyone benefits from ESF support and having an EU-level fund enables the financial support to be targeted at the most needy regions to the advantage of all. Some 9 million people are supported annually, with 4 million undertaking training, 2 million finding a job, etc.

You can benefit in a variety of ways from ESF funding: training or guidance to enhance your skills and career prospects; support to help set up a company or to find a better balance between work and family; and assistance for women, older workers and young people regarding access to the job market.

For example, under the *Daily Routine Project* in the Netherlands, some 140 local experiments have been financed to devise solutions to reconcile work and family life. In the Danish project *Network for Flexible Teaching and Courses*, a network of organisations offered individual training opportunities for unemployed people. Some 350 people have benefited so far, improving their chances of finding work as well as their overall well-being.

Future developments and challenges

The ESF is a key element in tackling future challenges in employment and social policy for the EU. Specific issues to tackle will be how to boost employment to increase living standards, helping EU workers to have high levels of skills and adaptability to remain competitive in a globalised world, and create a more inclusive society based on equal opportunities for all.

In addition, the challenge of the ageing population means that the ESF should focus on using the potential of the whole population: getting people into work increases competitiveness and reduces health and social costs.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A](#) More and better jobs
- > [A1](#) Unemployment and quality in work
- > [C](#) Inclusion and equality

Further information

- > European Social Fund
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=325&langId=en>

E2 EU funding programmes

PROGRESS

The EU's employment and social solidarity programme for 2007–13, PROGRESS aims to strengthen the EU's support to Member States to achieve the Social Agenda – more and better jobs and a more cohesive society. PROGRESS supports policy development in five areas: employment, social inclusion and protection, working conditions, non-discrimination and gender equality, with a budget of €743.25 million for seven years.

Did you know?

While Member States are primarily responsible for employment and social affairs, the main challenges that need to be addressed in the future are largely common to all EU-27 and therefore call for concerted EU action

PROGRESS aims to ensure the EU can play its part to support Member States' commitments to create more and better jobs and offer equal opportunities for all.

A diverse range of forces is shaping the future of the EU's employment and social policies – globalisation, technological change in a knowledge-based society, demographic change, living standards and quality of life. The EU needs to create the conditions that enable European citizens to take advantage of the opportunities offered by these forces.

It also needs to develop innovative policy-making and collaboration with partners and to make a commitment to achieving real results. It therefore aims to trigger a process of reform and change at national level in support of EU objectives and priorities

as laid down in the Social Agenda. Thus, PROGRESS is a catalyst and facilitator.

The programme provides support for three types of activity: analysis; mutual learning, awareness and dissemination; and support to main actors. It uses its funds to provide analysis and policy advice on the programme's policy areas; to monitor and report the implementation of EU legislation and policies at national level; to promote policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and to encourage and relay the views of the stakeholders and society at large to be promoted and relayed.

PROGRESS in practice

PROGRESS is directly managed by the European Commission, with the assistance of a committee of Member State representatives. It also relies on a network of partnerships involving national authorities, employers and workers organisations and NGOs.

Both PROGRESS and the European Social Fund (ESF) work alongside each other. However, the ESF invests in the implementation of employment and social

inclusion policies in Member States. In addition, transnational and inter-regional cooperation has long been a successful feature of ESF activities, promoting the identification of innovative solutions across borders. In contrast, PROGRESS is targeted more at the policy level, with activities designed to inform policy analysis and development, focusing on activities with a strong European dimension to ensure an EU added value.

How do citizens benefit?

PROGRESS seeks to improve the implementation of EU law. You can therefore ultimately benefit from the even playing field created by effective application of EU law and a common level of legal protection in areas such as health and safety; and non-discrimination and gender equality.

In addition, PROGRESS works to encourage key EU and national policy- and decision-makers and stakeholders to better understand and take ownership of EU objectives and priorities. Positively changing the understanding of these parties will benefit you by enabling national

policies to converge further towards those of the EU. Stronger partnerships among EU and national stakeholders will help build consensus and motivate change in support of EU objectives and priorities.

Citizens will ultimately benefit from PROGRESS as Member States will promote laws, policies and practices in line with Social Agenda goals – more and better jobs and a more cohesive society. And EU and national policy/decision-makers and other stakeholders will be in a better position to meet the challenges of a social Europe in a globalised world

Future developments and challenges

PROGRESS will continue to strengthen the EU's contribution in support of Member States' efforts to promote more and better jobs and equal opportunities for all. It will focus on delivering real results for EU citizens.

Monitoring through annual activity reports will help determine to what extent it is on the right track. A mid-way evaluation (covering 2008–10) will look at to what extent PROGRESS is achieving its objectives, its use of resources and its "added value".

Links to other factsheets

- > [A](#) More and better jobs
- > [B](#) Rights at work
- > [C](#) Inclusion and equality
- > [E1](#) European Social Fund
- > [F1](#) The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

Further information

- > PROGRESS
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en>

E3 EU funding programmes

European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aims to combat the negative effects of globalisation and to reconcile economic growth and social cohesion. It specifically aims to support you if you are made redundant due to changes in world trade patterns, enabling you to remain in employment or quickly find a new job. Lasting from 2007 to 2013, in total, the EGF can provide up to €500 million in assistance each year.

Did you know?

Up to 100 000 workers in the EU could be eligible for EGF funding every year

37% of Europeans see globalisation as a good opportunity for companies thanks to opening up of markets

Globalisation offers opportunities for achieving economic growth and more and better jobs. But it may have negative consequences and some workers may lose their jobs. Through the EGF, the EU can show its solidarity towards workers made redundant by the effects of globalisation. All Member States, large and small, new and old, can be affected by these changes and are therefore all potentially eligible for EGF assistance.

The EGF provides one-off, time-limited individual support geared to helping workers who are deemed to be severely and personally affected by trade-adjustment redundancies. It does not contribute towards the restructuring of companies or industrial sectors. It differs from other EU funds such as the European Social Fund. This supports multi-annual programmes serving strategic,

long-term goals – notably increasing the adaptability of workers and entrepreneurs, enhancing access to employment and the sustainable inclusion in the labour market, reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people, enhancing human capital and promoting partnerships and initiatives through networks of relevant stakeholders.

The EGF, in contrast, intervenes only in cases where the redundancies have a significant impact on a region or a sector and there is an EU dimension in terms of scale and impact. In addition, it only funds active employment measures to keep people in employment, but not passive social protection measures such as retirement pensions or unemployment benefits – the competence of Member States.

From EU to national, regional and local level

If you are made redundant as a result of globalisation effects, the EGF can add to the support being provided to you at local, regional and national levels. It would complement whatever support is given by your former employer and by your public authorities in terms of active employment measures.

Member States may apply for assistance from the EGF on behalf of the workers and are responsible for carrying out the activities that are funded. They must complete these activities within 12 months of applying for assistance.

How do citizens benefit?

The EGF is there to enable you to benefit from the advantages of globalisation – opening up of the markets and better opportunities for European companies – while at the same time providing you with some support, should you encounter its negative effects. It is designed to help you and others in a similar situation overcome the worst of the short-term shock of mass redundancy, should this happen, and so it is limited to a relatively short period. The hope is that this extra assistance will be effective in providing employment and in helping labour markets work better.

The aim of the EGF is to retain workers in, or reintegrate workers into, the labour market. If necessary, you could therefore benefit

from personalised support services such as job-search assistance, career guidance, outplacement assistance, tailor-made training and retraining and the promotion of entrepreneurship. The EGF could also provide you with special time-limited measures, such as job search allowances, mobility allowances, or allowances to you if you are participating in lifelong learning and training activities, all managed by your Member State.

Assistance is not limited to the workers of the main company or sector experiencing difficulties – if you work for one of the company's suppliers and are made redundant as a result of the main company's action, you are also eligible for EGF measures.

Future developments and challenges

As globalisation accelerates and spreads, the EGF will continue to support EU citizens suffering some of its negative effects.

The EGF will be monitored via an annual report on its activities and results, to ensure

that it is on the right track. In addition, the European Commission will undertake a mid-term evaluation in 2011 and a final evaluation in 2014, in cooperation with Member States.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A2](#) Flexicurity
- > [E1](#) European Social Fund

Further information

- > European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=326&langId=en>

F Policy in practice

The EU is pursuing a comprehensive Social Agenda with a view to developing a modern, innovative and sustainable European social model. This factsheet – and others in this series – explain the different policy instruments that are used in EU social policy and in implementing the Social Agenda. These notably include funding, legislation and social dialogue involving employers and trade unions. The EU also cooperates with other countries, either to help prepare countries that are candidates (or potential candidates) for EU membership in the social field, or to work on social issues internationally.

Did you know?

The EU is pursuing an ambitious Social Agenda to modernise Europe's social model as part of its strategy to promote economic growth and jobs

Under the EU Treaty, social partners – workers and employers – must be consulted before EU legislation is proposed on social policy matters: part of an extensive social dialogue at European level

Action on social policy at EU level does not replace the national efforts that are already being made in the various policy areas but is intended rather to complement, coordinate and support action taken by Member States and to add value. The EU approach to social policy is based on the *open method of coordination* (OMC): a mechanism to coordinate Member States'

economic, employment and social policies. The aim is for national policies to progress towards common European goals while leaving individual countries the choice of how best to achieve them. Under the OMC, the Member States draw up national action plans containing objectives and timetables, with the European Commission monitoring their progress.

Policy tools

The EU has a number of social policy instruments and tools. These include legislation on a range of social and work issues. Another important component is the social dialogue between employers and trade unions (social partners) as well as between the social partners and the EU institutions. And significant EU funding is available for relevant programmes and initiatives (see the factsheets on EU funding

programmes for further information). Along with the Social Agenda – where key priorities are boosting employment, fighting poverty and promoting equal opportunities – there is a European Employment Strategy to guide national efforts to create more and better jobs. The EU also works to integrate social policy considerations into all its policies – a process known as *mainstreaming*.

How do citizens benefit?

The EU is aiming to create more and better jobs and an inclusive society based on equal opportunities. This is reflected in EU legislation, which benefits you by laying down minimum standards that have to be respected EU-wide in areas like equality, discrimination, workers' health and safety, labour law, working conditions and information and consultation. EU legislation has, for example, given people the right to not be discriminated against in employment and has helped to reduce work-related accidents and illness.

EU-wide minimum social standards, combined with protection of rights and free movement of workers, help to create a cohesive society and a level playing field for businesses. Moreover, the OMC has been a catalyst for policy reform and has helped to bring about structural changes on the labour market and to create jobs.

Meanwhile, dialogue with civil society is a crucial link between the EU and its citizens. Social dialogue at EU level has produced concrete results: social partners have, for example, reached agreements on "telework" (doing work on a regular basis away from the employer's premises), on reducing workers' exposure to crystalline silica dust (a substance that can lead to silicosis, a potentially fatal lung condition which is also linked to other dangerous lung conditions such as emphysema and lung cancer) and on the prevention of violence and harassment in the workplace. Implementation of such agreements – which can have legal force – makes work safer, healthier and more flexible for millions of people.

Future developments and challenges

The EU will continue to pursue its current 2005–2010 Social Agenda up to 2010, while preparing a renewed agenda for after 2010. One challenge will be to maintain a positive interaction between economic, social and employment policies and reforms. And effective implementation and enforcement

of EU social legislation will remain important. This legislation already represents a solid basis for action. At the same time the EU is working to anticipate and respond to changes in, for instance, demography and work patterns – policy tools will continue to adapt to new circumstances in future.

Links to other factsheets

For further information on specific topics under *Policy in practice*, please consult all the factsheets in series F.

- > [E](#) EU funding programmes

Further information

- > DG Employment
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=23&langId=en>

F1 Policy in practice

The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

The EU's Social Agenda is a roadmap that is at the heart of the EU's social policy activities: it aims to modernise the European social model while helping to create more and better jobs and greater social well-being. The Agenda is the social policy dimension of the EU strategy – the Lisbon Strategy – for growth and jobs, containing concrete measures and avenues for future action.

The Agenda looks to ensure that economic, employment and social policies are mutually reinforcing.

Did you know?

The EU is pursuing an ambitious Social Agenda to modernise Europe's social model as part of its strategy to promote economic growth and jobs

Key Social Agenda priorities are boosting employment, fighting poverty and promoting equal opportunities

The EU's first social agenda, adopted in 2000 by the European Commission, covered the first five years of the Lisbon Strategy (2000–2005). The current version, launched by the European Commission in February 2005, covers the period 2005–2010.

The Social Agenda aims to modernise labour markets and social protection systems, combat poverty and promote equal opportunities, with a view to fostering prosperity and social solidarity in the EU.

The Social Agenda has two key overarching priorities. The first is employment, including aspects like job mobility, portable pensions, more and better jobs, adapting to new forms of work, and managing company restructuring through social dialogue.

Fighting poverty and promoting equal opportunities is the second main theme, which addresses issues such as dealing with demographic change, reforming pensions and healthcare, tackling discrimination and inequality, and fostering equal opportunities between women and men.

Implementing the agenda

The Social Agenda is implemented in partnership between the EU institutions, public authorities at local, regional and national levels, employer and worker representatives and non-governmental organisations. Various instruments and processes are used to implement the

Social Agenda and to support national implementation efforts and the exchange of experience, including: the European Employment Strategy, the *open method of coordination* in the field of social protection and inclusion, the European Social Fund, and the PROGRESS programme.

How do citizens benefit?

The 2005-2010 Social Agenda helps you by working to provide jobs and equal opportunities for all and to ensure that the benefits of the EU's growth and jobs drive reach everyone in society. By modernising labour markets and social protection systems, the Agenda should help you to get the most out of life and work while protecting the most vulnerable in society.

The Agenda tackles key issues that matter to everyone – a whole range of issues including: poverty, pensions, health care, social security, finding a job, health and safety at work, the balance between work and home life, and the effects of company restructuring.

The Agenda aims to give EU citizens confidence in their ability to manage the challenges facing society as a result of globalisation, technological development and ageing populations. These challenges are also opportunities. The Agenda sets out employment and social policies designed to help people take up these opportunities with confidence – confidence in their skills, in the welfare system and in their capacity to adapt to changing circumstances.

Above all, the Agenda should help to provide what citizens most want: decent jobs and social justice.

Future developments and challenges

The current Social Agenda, launched in 2005, runs until 2010. However, as all the measures foreseen had been adopted, the European Commission launched in July 2008 a renewed social agenda package including initiatives, for example, in the field of anti-discrimination, education and health. One challenge for the future will be to maintain a positive interaction between economic, social and employment policies,

whilst creating new synergies with other policies like education and health. Particular attention will be given to implementation.

Meanwhile, Europe's policy agenda will continue to anticipate and adapt to new circumstances – such as demographic change and the ageing population – to ensure the sustainability of Europe's social model.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A](#) More and better jobs
- > [A1](#) Unemployment and quality in work
- > [C](#) Inclusion and equality

Further information

- > Social Agenda
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1&langId=en>

F2 Policy in practice

Social dialogue

Social dialogue refers to the discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions that take place between employers and trade unions as well as between them and the EU institutions. Social dialogue at EU level helps to modernise European social policies, complementing national social dialogue and industrial relations. Social partners – employers' and workers' representatives – play a key role in defining European social standards, in adapting the way we organise our work to changing circumstances, and in boosting growth, jobs and social well-being. Their fundamental role in shaping legislation in the social field is recognised in the EU Treaty.

Did you know?

Under the EU Treaty, social partners – workers and employers – must be consulted before EU legislation is proposed on social policy matters

A "Tripartite Social Summit" meets at least once a year for a high-level exchange of views between social partners and EU representatives

In *bipartite* social dialogue at European level, employer and trade union organisations discuss cross-cutting issues affecting industry as a whole, as well as issues relating to specific sectors of the economy. Dialogue takes place in committees and working groups, and can lead to negotiations on various subjects, with the European Commission acting as facilitator and mediator. There are 35 *sectoral* social dialogue committees, covering economic sectors as diverse

as agriculture, commerce, civil aviation, the chemical industry and more.

In *tripartite* social dialogue, employers' and workers' representatives meet together with representatives of the EU institutions (Commission, Council of Ministers) at the biannual Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment, as well as in regular talks on a technical and political level on macro-economics, employment, social protection and education and training.

Social partners

Representative social partners at EU level must be consulted before EU social legislation is drawn up, and they can negotiate agreements on matters of social policy to be implemented by EU law or by the social partners themselves.

Six organisations are involved in cross-industry social dialogue, including

organisations representing trade unions (ETUC), employers in the private sector (BUSINESSEUROPE), the public sector (CEEP) and small and medium-sized enterprises (UEAPME), and professional and managerial staff (EUROCADRES and CEC). A significant number of European organisations from specific economic sectors take part in the respective sectoral dialogues.

How do citizens benefit?

The social partners have first-hand experience and in-depth knowledge of the workplace: involving them in social dialogue at EU level makes for better policy-making and helps to ensure that their concerns are taken into account in all legislative initiatives.

The social partners contribute on many different social policy issues of interest for citizens and workers, such as: modernisation of employment relations and work organisation; training and lifelong learning; health and safety; integration into the jobs market of disadvantaged groups; balance between work and family life; "telework"; restructuring; equal opportunities; and job mobility.

Social dialogue has produced results. The social partners have influenced and in some cases determined EU social policy legislation. They have reached various agreements establishing minimum standards on social policy issues. And they have produced a range of other texts to spread good practice and exchange information like codes of conduct, guidelines and handbooks. To name just one example, employers and trade unions in 2007 reached an agreement on a zero-tolerance approach to tackling moral and sexual harassment and physical violence in the workplace. Data suggests that one in 20 workers reports being exposed to bullying and/or harassment each year.

Future developments and challenges

Social dialogue will remain a core part of EU social policy and the European social model: the EU's new Lisbon Treaty explicitly recognises the role of social partners and of the Tripartite Social Summit. And social dialogue will continue to broach topical themes. On the current agenda are issues like: work/life balance, including leave for family reasons, work arrangements and care facilities; making it easier for

disadvantaged groups to access jobs, for example through lifelong learning; and recognition of professional qualifications throughout Europe. New topics like the social consequences of climate change and energy dependency are also coming up for discussion. Meanwhile, the social partners are working to fully integrate their members from newer Member States into the EU social dialogue.

Links to other factsheets

- > [B2 Labour law](#)

Further information

- > Social dialogue
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>
- > Videos on social dialogue
ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/videos_en.htm

F3 Policy in practice

EU enlargement and international cooperation

As the number of EU members has grown, EU enlargement has created a much bigger single market for the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital: the EU has worked and works to ensure that this market is accompanied by a level playing field in terms of social standards. Meanwhile, globalisation means that international cooperation on employment and social policy issues is becoming more and more important: the EU cooperates actively in this area with other countries and regions. The aim of international cooperation is fair globalisation for all, for European citizens as well as for Europe's partners. EU activity on a global level is about promoting fair globalisation and extending the benefits of globalisation to everyone.

Did you know?

Any country wanting to join the EU must, among other things, meet EU standards in areas such as labour law, equal treatment of women and men in employment, anti-discrimination and health and safety at work

The EU's Social Agenda puts a strong emphasis on the contribution the EU can make to strengthen the social dimension of globalisation

Social policy and the enlarged EU

The latest EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 have taken the EU's membership up to 27 countries and its population to roughly half a billion. A number of candidate or potential candidate countries are also hoping to join.

Countries wanting to become members of the EU must, among other things, meet the legislative requirements in the social policy field on subjects such as labour law, gender equality, health and safety in the workplace and anti-discrimination. The EU supports them in enhancing employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and in

readying themselves for EU-level coordination of national policies in these areas. They must also make sure that the necessary structures for social dialogue are in place.

The EU conducts membership negotiations with countries that are sufficiently prepared in order to finalise the terms of their accession, while helping candidates or potential candidates to prepare for candidate status, accession negotiations and membership through funding, technical support and helping to build capacity for social dialogue.

International cooperation

Meanwhile, the EU cooperates actively with international organisations and with other countries and regions, including those neighbouring the EU, with a view to promoting the EU social policy agenda and international labour standards and exchanging experience.

Key international cooperation aims include addressing the social dimension of globalisation and providing decent work for all – looking at issues like employment, rights at work, social protection, social dialogue and equal opportunities.

How do citizens benefit?

On EU **enlargement**, helping countries to prepare for EU membership and establishing certain criteria to be met before they join serve to make sure that a minimum level of social and other standards exists across the EU. The EU also supports projects in candidate and potential candidate countries to enhance employment and training opportunities, reduce social disparities and to improve quality of life, notably for minorities, women, children and disadvantaged groups. To name just a couple of examples, the *Bizimköy* ("our village") centre for the disabled in Turkey has helped to create sustainable employment opportunities for people with disabilities, while the EU has also part-funded a project supporting reform of social care and child protection in Montenegro.

International cooperation helps to address global issues, to spread EU values and standards beyond its borders and to exchange experience with partners. This should help everybody, not just EU citizens. For example, the European Commission has been developing a policy dialogue with countries in the EU's neighbourhood and with emerging economies and regional entities, for example in Asia and Latin America, to address employment and social challenges. It also contributes to international efforts within the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other international organisations to raise the importance of the social dimension of globalisation and help promote the ILO's *decent work* agenda. The EU also considers employment and social issues in its trade policy.

Future developments and challenges

The EU will continue to make sure that the process of EU **enlargement** contributes to enhancing employment and social justice, as they are key concerns for citizens both in candidate and potential candidate countries and in the EU. The EU will offer support, but the challenge is in fact primarily for the countries that want to join: ultimately it is up to them to ready themselves for membership in social and other areas.

The EU will also further develop its cooperation on social issues of global

importance, in bilateral relations with its partners and multilaterally, on the world stage. **International cooperation** challenges will include pursuing the decent work for all agenda. Increasing attention will be paid to broadening social protection coverage and to the social impact of climate change. Addressing employment and social challenges in the EU's neighbourhood will be another top priority in the years ahead, to promote sustainable development, stability and good governance in countries and regions near the EU's borders.

Links to other factsheets

- > [A](#) More and better jobs
- > [D](#) Job mobility
- > [C](#) Inclusion and equality
- > [E1](#) The 2005-2010 Social Agenda

Further information

- > Enlargement
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=320&langId=en>
- > International affairs
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=87&langId=en>
- > Decent work
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=323&langId=en>