

IMPROVING SKILLS MATCHING IN EUROPE

European social partners' recommendations

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The following recommendations have been developed by the European cross-industry social partners, taking into account the findings from their project on “improving skills matching in Europe”. This project was supported by an independent representative study following surveying and interviewing of the national members of ETUC, BusinessEurope, SGI Europe and SMEunited as well as EU level sectoral trade union and employer organisations. European, and national social partners, namely employers' organisations and trade unions of workers, are responsible for and are essential actors in shaping and implementing skills policies at all appropriate levels.

According to C/2023/1389 COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 12 June 2023 on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union, “Social dialogue encompasses tripartite and bipartite consultation and negotiation, in the private and public sector, at all levels, including dialogue at cross-sectoral, sectoral, enterprise level, or at national, regional or local level. National tripartite social dialogue brings together government, workers and employers to discuss public policies, laws and regulations and other decisions that affect the social partners. Tripartite consultations can ensure greater cooperation between the tripartite partners and build consensus on relevant national policies.”

European social partners have recently adopted Joint Procedures for European cross-sectoral social dialogue, which help to improve trust between the social partners by developing a better common understanding of what the EU social dialogue can deliver and how to conduct it.

TFEU Article 152 explicitly recognizes and promotes the role of the social partners at EU level and commits the EU to facilitating dialogue between them Articles 154 and 155 TFEU define the framework for EU social dialogue, its consultation and negotiation procedures involving social partners at EU level.

The role of social partners in shaping the skills system

1. Policy design and implementation: Through an effective legal and/or policy framework and social dialogue Member States and their competent authorities should effectively, proactively and systematically engage with social partners at all appropriate levels (national, regional, sectoral) to improve skills policies and the functioning and orientation of skills systems. In doing so it is important to take into account reliable and measurable labour market and skills data, so as to support job and skills matching and reduce skills shortages.
2. VET qualifications and occupational profiles: National social partners should continue and further develop cooperation among themselves and with relevant public authorities (eg ministries) to improve training systems. i.e. initial and continuous VET.
3. Joint solutions by social partners: National social partners should aim to strengthen their cooperation and social dialogue, where needed, in order to define joint solutions, including the negotiation of collective agreements, to anticipate skills development, and to design, implement and evaluate skills policies training arrangements, the gathering and interpretation of skills intelligence and pilot initiatives.

Skills matching and recruitment

4. Labour market integration strategies: Member States, together with social partners and public and private employment services should develop policy frameworks that encourage the adoption of inclusive and forward-looking labour market integration strategies. Such frameworks should support the design and provision of flexible, recognised training programmes that support the inactive and unemployed to enter the labour market and to obtain and maintain quality jobs.
5. Facilitating recruitment: According to national specificities public and private employment services and social partners should strengthen their cooperation in order to support labour market participation; facilitate recruitment; employability; matching, including through mobility and migration; and the provision of career guidance.

6. Cooperation with PES: Social partners should take part in PES governance structures and help to reinforce their role that effectively shape and implement labour market policy, according to national specificities, supporting apprenticeship matching, defining training needs and supporting training provisions, and improving recruitment practices.
7. Awareness raising and guidance: National social partners should support and contribute to the work of public employment services and take a role in awareness raising about available jobs and career opportunities in different sectors. This could include guidance on sector-specific upskilling and reskilling, and apprenticeship opportunities for all ages.

Transitions and retention: upskilling and reskilling

8. Training solutions: Member States should ensure the meaningful and timely involvement of social partners in skills governance at European, national, sectoral and local levels. This is essential for supporting the financing, delivery and provision of up-skilling and re-skilling, reflecting the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights on the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning for everyone. Member States should also recognise the competence and support the capacity of social partners in designing and implementing effective training provision in the interests of employers and workers.
9. Transition and retention strategies: Social partners should examine how to use their bipartite social dialogue as well as their tripartite exchanges with public authorities at all appropriate level to develop transition and retention strategies for employees, including as concerns job-relevant recognised training provision and participation and the role of labour mobility in supporting fair job-to-job, industry-to-industry and intra-EU and cross-border transitions and matching.
10. Investing in training: National social partners should identify further ways to finance and broaden access to training within their national context. Sustainable solutions to the financing and provision of training also need to be identified with the support of European funding, national budgets, social partners' training funds and through social partners' bipartite initiatives and dialogue; and in close cooperation with appropriate public authorities.



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