



Director-General Joost Korte

Director-General Joost Korte meeting Markus Beyrer, Director-General of BusinessEurope

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Scene setter

You are meeting the Director-General of BusinessEurope Markus Beyrer on his request. Mr Beyrer intends to discuss the following topics: next steps in view of 2021 action plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, minimum wages and social partner consultation, skills-related issue, platform work and capacity-building of social partners.

The meeting takes place after the European cross-industry social partners have concluded their nine-months autonomous negotiation on digitalisation tbc (NB: last meeting planned for 11 March), after the TSS preparatory meeting between EVP Dombrovskis/Cmsr Schmit and Markus Beyrer/Luca Visentini on 13 March and ahead of the TSS on 25 March.

On 2 March the four European cross-industry social partners sent a joint letter to President von der Leyen expressing their concern about the guidelines on stakeholder consultation according to the 2017 Better Regulation guidelines and related Toolboxes. They ask the Commission for a revision of the Better Regulation Guidelines to guarantee that the social partners' consultations are not disrupted by parallel stakeholder consultations.

BusinessEurope has attended the hearing of 17 January on the renewed skills agenda and sent a written contribution; BusinessEurope also participated in the hearing of 20 January on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and sent a written contribution together with SMEunited and CEEP on 4 March; BusinessEurope responded to the first phase social partner consultation on minimum wage.

On the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan BusinessEurope supports the objective of a social market economy that works for people, with the right measures at the right level, bearing in mind that the EU and Member States have clearly defined roles when it comes to social policy. Moreover Markus Beyrer is on record as stating that the European Semester process is a key tool to coordinate these (social and employment) reforms and make sure Member States deliver on their promises. This is equally the best tool to implement the Pillar.

On minimum wage BusinessEurope submitted their reply to the first stage consultation on 19 February 2020. They consider that the EU has no competence to introduce a legal instrument on minimum wages.

On Skills BusinessEurope was involved in the consultation on the Updated Skills Agenda and has sent written feedback. They also took part in the dedicated hearing of social partners on the reinforced Skills Agenda 2020 held on 17 January.

On Platform work BusinessEurope stated that the EU should leave Member States to regulate platform work autonomously. BusinessEurope supports a harmonised European-level framework for the Digital Single Market. Other large BusinessEurope members (such as the Confederation of German Employers' Associations) towards the planned EU initiative on platform workers focus on social and labour policy being the competence of Member States.

On Covid-19 Likely to be raised at the meeting; no position paper from BusinessEurope yet (situation on 11 March; the very latest LTT to be used)

Objectives:

Social Dialogue

What they want:

- *BusinessEurope, being critical vis-a-vis any new legislation in the social field, is seeking assurance regarding its concerns namely on the initiative on minimum wages. They are equally critical regarding the announced binding measures on gender pay transparency (DG JUST).*
- *Despite no encouragement from unions' side, BusinessEurope might reiterate their proposal on governance, i.e. creating two new advisory committees for employment and social protection.*

What we want:

- *To assure BusinessEurope of Cion's full commitment to social dialogue and ensure that the Commission is fully respecting the Treaty based special role of social partners (Art 154-155 TFEU).*

European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan

What they want:

- *Information as to the next steps towards the Action Plan.*
- *With a view to the Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, he will highlight the importance to involve national social partners.*

What we want:

- *To inform regarding the next steps (in particular drawing attention to the dedicated hearing on 8 June) and get BusinessEurope's feedback in this regard.*

EU Minimum Wage

What they want:

- *An EU initiative on minimum wages building on the existing work **within the European Semester** process, **but not a new legal instrument (Directive)**, that supports the involvement of social partners in statutory minimum wage setting processes.*
- *More EU and national support for capacity-building of national social partners.*

What we want:

- *Reassure BusinessEurope that the Commission proposal **will respect national systems of collective bargaining** and the autonomy of social partners. Encourage BusinessEurope to enter into negotiations with other social partners.*

Skills

What they want:

- *A link between the Updated Skills Agenda with the Industrial Strategy and the SME Strategy.*
- *Reassurance regarding Individual Learning Accounts and their implementation.*
- *Exploration of public/private partnerships re: training.*

What we want:

- *To thank BusinessEurope for its contribution so far to the Updated Skills Agenda – and agree regarding Skills and role in SME and Industrial Strategies*

- *Recall commitment of the Commission to involve social partners in relevant policy initiatives (e.g. recent dedicated hearings on renewed skills agenda, an Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee).*
- *To ensure BusinessEurope's continued contribution and buy-in into skills initiatives where appropriate.*

Platform Work

What they want:

- *The EU should leave Member States to regulate platform work autonomously.*

What we want:

- *Reassure BusinessEurope that the Commission will consult thoroughly with social partners, digital platforms, and EU governments before coming forward with a proposal in 2021.*
- *Underline that a European-level comprehensive social and labour approach will provide legal certainty in order to support the growth of European players in the platform economy.*

Capacity Building

What they want:

- *BusinessEurope can be expected to ask again for strengthened support for capacity-building in future ESF+ and political support from the Commission when it comes to negotiations of Operational Programmes for those Member States where social partners have important needs*

What we want:

- *Underline that this Commission has recognised the need for improving support for the capacity-building of national social partners.*

Line to take

[Social Dialogue]

- Congratulate social partners to their autonomous agreement concluded on digitalisation.
- Express hope that social dialogue will produce more important outcomes and ask European social partners to make better use of the instruments they have at their disposal including the negotiations of social partner agreements on planned social policy initiatives.

[European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan]

- Recall how the development of an Action Plan will be important for this Commission's mandate, for both the President and Commissioner Schmit – as such it will be developed working closely with Member States **in full respect of the subsidiarity principle**.
- We want to **hear from social partners** - Note how there is now a wide public consultation on the Action Plan, launched on 14 January, along with the Communication – with **stakeholders at all levels having given their views and pledges** by the end of November 2020 via a dedicated webpage.
- Draw attention to how the Commission will organise on **8 June a dedicated hearing with social partners**, with the participation of EVP Dombrovskis and Commissioner Schmit.

[NB: Date was agreed with Cab EVP Dombrovskis and Cmsr Schmit as well as cross-industry social partners at Presidents level, incl Markus Beyrer, the concept note is currently prepared and the invite will soon be sent]

- Ultimately the objective is to gather inputs for the Action Plan, which the Commission will present in early 2021 (January, tbc).

[Minimum Wage – social partner consultation]

- **Thank for the valuable input** to the first stage of the consultation.
- We are now **examining the replies received**, and it will then [on 29 April] launch **a second stage consultation** on the possible content of the initiative, and the instrument to be used.
- Recall how **the EU has competence to legislate on minimum wages** where it does not interfere with national competence and with the autonomy of social partners.
- Any initiative in this field **will not introduce a common European Minimum Wage, nor force the introduction of a statutory minimum wage** in Member States where wages are set exclusively through collective bargaining
- The Commission recognises the **importance of collective bargaining** for minimum wage setting. Promoting collective bargaining could help foster upward convergence in working conditions.

[Skills]

- **Thank BusinessEurope for their input to the consultation of social partners and participation in the dedicated hearing on 17 January.**
- Agree that **the importance of the social partners in helping individuals with training and in implementing the Updated Skills Agenda.**

- Say that skills are central to address the mega-trends Europe faces, yet we have:
 - more than **20% of EU adults** without basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills, and **77% of EU firms say lack of staff with the right skills** is a barrier to investment.
- Agree with BusinessEurope that the **link of the Updated Skills Agenda with the new Industry Strategy and SME strategy** in which skills will play an important role.
- Say that unlocking public and private investments will be one of the objectives of the Pact for Skills, one of the central actions of the Updated Skills Agenda.
- Say that part of the focus of increased investment on skills would be through initiatives such as Individual Learning Accounts as part of the Updated Skills Agenda.
- Nevertheless, **on Individual Learning Accounts, agree with the BusinessEurope position that ILAs can only work if there is a surrounding eco-system** with quality assurance, guidance, validation, and measures to address low take-up.

[Platform Economy]

- Underline how, to realise the full potential of platform work, we need to ensure the **sustainable growth of the platform economy**. Sustainability requires that platform work does not unfairly circumvent social contributions or taxation.
- Note how because of the multi-dimensional nature of platform work, the **Commission wants to make sure it considers all elements** and consults all parties before acting.
- The majority of European platforms are small compared to US competitors. To help European players grow, it is crucial to **minimise administrative burden and provide a certain legal environment with clear standards**.
- As a first step, **the forthcoming Digital Services Act will upgrade liability and safety rules for platforms**.
- Recall how we are organising a **high level conference on platform work on 22 September 2020**, to hear the side of workers as well as the side of platforms and businesses, and to take note of the variety of business models, economic sectors and geographic coverage present in platform work.

[Social partners capacity building]

- An EU level approach as regards the capacity building of social partners targeting all Member States would not work. **National challenges are identified in Annex D and should be tackled through the future programmes**
- In the ESF committee last December, the Commission invited social partners to come forward with specific needs in terms of capacity building on the ground.
- **So far the Commission has received none**. Without input from the social partners, it would be very difficult to argue in support of a blanket support to capacity building vis-à-vis Member States
- **Once the Commission has received specific requests** on capacity building, we will be able to **support them during the negotiation process of ESF+ programmes** on the ground. The Commission can also provide tailored training to national social partners as regards programme design and involvement in the partnership.

Defensives

Social Dialogue

Initiative by BusinessEurope for new Commission to create two new tripartite Advisory Committees on Employment and Social Protection

BusinessEurope: Will the COM support the creation of two new Advisory Committees?

- The “New Start” has created momentum on which I am fully committed to build on.
- I note your request to create new Advisory Committees on employment policies and on social protection on top of the existing ones [in DG EMPL remit: 1. Advisory Committee on free movement of workers; 2. Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Social Security Systems (AdvC); 3. Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT); 4. Advisory Committee on safety and health at workplace (ACSH)]
- Let me point that European social dialogue is not lacking meeting opportunities and discussion fora. At this stage, I would just caution against proliferation of committees to avoid a duplication of discussions and blurring of roles.
- As you know, in this mandate we will be very cautious to avoid creating new administrative burden and adding governance layers. That is why we will apply the principle ‘one in, one out’ as regards new legislation. This principle may also apply when it comes to creating new administrative structures.

[Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights]

How will social partners be involved?

- Social partners will be consulted through a broad range of fora for exchange. For instance at European level through a dedicated hearing, at regular meetings such as Tripartite Social Summit, the Social Dialogue Committee and Sectoral social dialogue committees.
- Additionally the exchange takes also place at national level through events to be organised by the COM with the COM representations in the Member States.
- COM took note of the social partners concerns and is currently reflecting how the national social partners can be even stronger involved.

Minimum Wage

According to Article 153 (5) TFEU, the EU has no competence to introduce a Directive on minimum wages or on collective bargaining. What could be the legal basis for this proposal?

- This is a question for a later stage.
- But the initiative could be based on Article 153 (1) (b) TFEU on working conditions. The definition of a common framework on minimum wages will in fact aim to improve the working conditions of workers with low wages and low bargaining power.
- As clarified by the constant case law of the European Court of Justice [in light of Article 153 (5) TFEU], EU action in the field of pay is possible but limited by the need not to interfere with national competence and with the autonomy of social partners.

- This means, for instance, that the EU cannot intervene directly on the level of minimum wages and that it cannot recommend the introduction of national statutory minimum wages in countries where these are autonomously negotiated by the social partners.
- Similarly, the EU cannot impose the introduction of extension mechanisms in relation to collectively agreed minimum wages, in line with the requirement to fully respect collective bargaining freedom.
- [Recent initiatives using Art. 153 TFEU as legal basis, such as the Directive on work-life balance, and the Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions have already touched upon different aspects of pay.]

Background

Social Dialogue

Next TSS

The general theme of the upcoming Tripartite Social Summit on 25 March is “Contribution of the social partners for a competitive and inclusive economy as basis for a socially just and economically feasible low carbon and digital transformation”

Subtheme 1: Addressing together demographic challenges, Subtheme 2: Fostering a green economy through skills development, job retention and creation, Subtheme 3: Working together towards the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

NB: COM and Council had pushed for a shorter title, however no agreement by ETUC; the current title is a compromise between Beyrer and Visentini.

The March TSS will finally follow the usual choreography and have the same duration. Commission and President of the European Council had proposed to shorten the TSS by 30 min – an idea that social partners did not support. Also, Markus Beyrer and Luca Visentini had attended a meeting with the Cabinets of President von der Leyen and President Michel on 10 February to discuss some more far-reaching changes in order to make the TSS more political and interactive. Following the resistance of social partners, it was decided to come back to this question after the March TSS.

Autonomous agreement on digitalisation

The social partners’ negotiations on an Autonomous Framework Agreement on digitalisation were announced in their joint work programme by social partners 2019-2021.

The negotiations started end June 2019. Social partners have nine months to conclude their agreement, last meeting currently scheduled for 11 March.

Following this meeting the EU cross-industry social partners reached a deal on their agreement on digitalisation at their negotiation meeting which took place yesterday.

According to first informal information that we have received, the agreement will cover the following areas:

- Commitment to a joint process for managing digital change
- Skills
- Employment security
- Human in control
- Modalities of connecting and disconnecting (i.e. the right to disconnect)

The agreement will now go for the voting process in the respective social partner bodies.

However, this will take approximately 4-6 weeks for their internal validation process of the draft agreement (agreement only to be signed and disclosed in May 2020).

It can be expected that the “right to disconnect” represent a particular hurdle.

Consultations with Social Partners since January 2020

Art 154: 1st stage social partner consultation on minimum wage on-going (deadline 25 February)

The first dedicated hearing with social partners under this mandate took place took place on “Updating the skills agenda” on 17 January

A second dedicated hearing took place on the Youth Guarantee 20 February

A third one on pay transparency measures – originally announced for 13 Jan but then postponed by DG JUST for change of COM planning – is planned end of June.

A high level social partner hearing is planned for 8 June on the Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights.

BusinessEurope's proposal to create two new Advisory Committees

In its position paper on “The Future of the social dimension in Europe” of June 2019 BusinessEurope called upon the next Commission to create two new Advisory Committees on employment and social protection, along the lines of the Advisory Committees on Vocational Training. By creating these new tripartite Advisory Committees BusinessEurope calls for a stronger involvement of national social partners in both policy-making and monitoring.

This idea has since been repeatedly promoted by BusinessEurope including by Director General of Business Europe Markus Beyrer in a meeting with Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis.

In its position paper: “Prosperity, people and planet” BusinessEurope reiterated the need for improving the governance process (however without explicitly mentioning the Tripartite Committees):

“The EU should improve the governance of European coordination of national policies on employment and social protection, ensuring that employers, the trade unions, European Commission and Member States are working together and deepening the cooperation between social partners and the Council’s Employment and Social Protection Committees.”

Minimum Wage

a) Social Partner Consultation Process and next steps

The Commission is undertaking a two-stage consultation of the social partners, as required by Art. 154 TFEU when submitting proposals for new legislative social policy initiatives based on Art 153 TFEU, i.e. a Directive.

On 14 January, the Commission launched the first-stage consultation of the social partners on the need and possible direction of EU action on minimum wages. This consultation document was adopted alongside a Communication on ‘a strong Social Europe for just transitions’. The consultation ended on 25 February.

The Commission is currently examining the views expressed by the social partners.

The Commission will launch on 29 April a second stage consultation, focusing on the possible instrument and content of the initiative.

A Commission proposal on fair minimum wages could then be adopted in the second half of this year.

If social partners decide to engage in negotiations at any point during the two-stage consultation, the Commission would suspend its initiative for the duration of the negotiations, which would last a maximum of nine months.

b) BusinessEurope reply to first stage consultation

Identification of issues and the possible areas for EU action: BusinessEurope agrees that wages, including minimum wages, are an important aspect of the social market economy as they have a strong impact on labour market efficiency and contribute to ensuring mutual benefits for companies and workers. They also agree that the objectives identified by Commission (tackling wage inequalities, raising living standards and ensuring workers' have a fair share of productivity gains and GDP growth) are all relevant and important goals. However, they note that different tools/policies are needed to tackle these objectives. In general, they consider that the Commission analysis points to a number of important issues. In particular, they agree that discussions on minimum wages cannot be isolated from broader labour market and social issues (e.g. labour law and tax-benefits systems). They also agree that minimum wages must take into account the economic environment and the possible effects on employment and competitiveness. In addition, they agree that minimum wages have a spill-over effect on wages slightly above the minimum wage. However, they note that this can have consequences for the whole wage structure. To this end, they highlight gaps in the analysis regarding the negative impact on hiring decision and employment prospects for workers targeted by the minimum wage. They also note that this can also affect collective bargaining on wages, limiting as such the role of the social partners. Finally, they acknowledge that the document rightly identifies the insufficient involvement of social partners in statutory wage setting systems in some countries.

BusinessEurope made concrete remarks regarding the four main possible areas for EU action:

Regarding **adequacy**, BusinessEurope has strong concerns about defining a European level for an adequate wage. In their view, this can only be decided at a national level, taking into account other factors influencing income (such as taxes and non-wage labour costs) and the design of the overall labour market, social protection and industrial relations systems. Regarding the proposals for measuring adequacy, they raise a number of issues, noting that these give different results in terms of the performance of Member States. First, they acknowledge that looking at the net income of minimum wage earners takes into account the impact of taxes and non-wage labour costs on take-home pay; however it does not adequately consider the overall hiring costs. Second, they recognise that, if the intention is for minimum wages to ensure a decent standard of living, it is important to look at the real value of wages in purchasing power standards. However, in their view, this measure also does not take into account other sources of income. In general, they agree on the need to consider productivity developments but they underline that the consultation document does not acknowledge that productivity growth is needed to afford overall increases to the cost of employing a worker. Finally, they note that, another issue to consider is which parts of the wage are included in such calculations.

Regarding **coverage**, BusinessEurope considers that it is inappropriate for the EU to deal with the issue of coverage in the context of an initiative on minimum wages. Rather, the Commission should stick to its promise of respecting "national traditions, social partners' autonomy and the freedom of collective bargaining". For countries with statutory minimum wage systems, the question of coverage should be discussed jointly with social partners.

Regarding the **involvement of social partners**, BusinessEurope acknowledges that the systems of setting minimum wages and the role of the social partners vary considerably across Europe. They underline that improvements in this area are essential to ensure that wage setting at national level, including determining coverage

and wage levels, takes into account the economic situation in the country and the impact at company level. The aim should be to support the establishment of well-functioning consultation procedures leading to possible agreements between relevant national authorities and social partners. However, this should only be encouraged where social partners on both sides call for it.

Regarding the **national minimum wage update mechanisms/criteria**, BusinessEurope agrees with the Commission that the existence of clear and stable criteria to guide adjustments of statutory minimum wages is important and that this is lacking in some Member States. This is important for companies to be able to anticipate wage adjustments. They stress that the involvement of social partners in identifying appropriate criteria is essential to ensure that the different economic, labour market and sectoral situations are taken into account, as well as the reality in companies. Unilateral actions by governments, without adequate consultation of social partners, must be avoided.

Need and scope of EU action: BusinessEurope welcomes the Commission's commitment that any future initiative would respect the principle of subsidiarity and the autonomy of social partners. However, they believe that an EU directive on minimum wages is not the appropriate tool to reach the objectives. In their view, the way forward is to improve economic and social convergence across the EU through broader measures, including better functioning education and training systems, investment in research and development and performing welfare systems

BusinessEurope stresses that the EU has no competence to introduce a legal instrument on minimum wages or collective bargaining based on Article 153 (5) TFEU. In particular, they stress that there is a lack of legal basis to harmonise the level of minimum wages across the EU or to establish levels of pay. Also, they underline that such an initiative would strongly interfere with Member States' wage-setting and industrial relations systems and social partners' autonomy, in particular in the case of a Directive. A Directive by definition gives the power to the legislator and risks leading to court cases. Any future initiative must respect those Member States where social partners do not want legislation on minimum wage or legislation extending their agreed minimum wages

Nevertheless, BusinessEurope believes that there is an added-value for an EU action, but such action should build on the existing work done on minimum wages within the European Semester, based on Article 147 TFEU. Currently, wage negotiations are being politicised as governments take unilateral decisions to increase minimum wages, without adequate involvement of social partners or taking into consideration business needs. Therefore, such action could strengthen the involvement of social partners in statutory minimum wage-setting processes where the social partners on both sides request it, including more systematic and timely consultation. This could be done through initiatives aimed at supporting social partners, promoting exchanges of information and best practices, providing comparative analysis and advice, as well as promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences, in particular through pilot projects. This should only be encouraged where the request comes from the social partners themselves on both sides and must not instruct social partners on how they should set minimum wages. There is also a need for more support from the EU and Member States for capacity-building of national social partners, in terms of collective bargaining, including where appropriate, for determining wages as well as capacity to engage in discussions on statutory minimum wages.

Willingness to enter into negotiations: At this stage, Business Europe does not intend to initiate a separate dialogue under Article 155 TFEU on the issues identified in the consultation document.

Skills

Position of BusinessEurope on skills/upskilling/reskilling

BusinessEurope have said they very much appreciate the update of the Skills Agenda linked to SME strategy & industrial strategy.

Social partners should be the key pillars for helping employed individuals with training. The responsibility should be shared, also in terms of costs ("bipartite training funds"). Countries with such systems perform best in terms of participation.

BusinessEurope thinks that the "individual in the driving seat" might be problematic: if employers pay, they should also have a say on training and retraining. Individual Learning Accounts can only work with quality assurance, guidance, validation, and measures to address low take-up, and so far exists only in few MS. The Commission should be clear about what it can & cannot do, should not create unrealistic expectations.

Private employment services (e.g. Adecco) call for flexibility – which also requires empowering individuals.

Direct training costs as well as indirect costs due to absence of workers is a key issue for SMEs.

For the unemployed, government and public employment services should be in charge. A potential for public-private partnerships in the areas of skills should be explored. STEM skills are crucial: a proposal to include a new benchmark target of 25% of graduates in this area by 2030 (up from 20% now) should be considered.

Skills agenda

Building on the Skills Agenda launched in 2016, the **Updated European Skills Agenda** was launched by the Commission on **18 March 2020**.

It addresses the urgent need for upskilling and reskilling and the Life-Long learning imperative through its flagship actions.

The **updated Skills Agenda** wants to ensure that the European workforce is ready for the green and digital transitions and that no one is left behind.

The updated Skills Agenda will in particular aim at:

- empowering workers and individuals to upskill and reskill (including by exploring an EU initiative on the Individual Learning Accounts),
- modernising Vocational Education and Training (VET), through a proposal for a new Council Recommendation,
- generating new concrete commitments from the business side with regards to their contribution to the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce.

On 10 March, Commission announced its **new Industry Strategy and SME strategy** in which skills will play an important role.

Platform Economy

Maxime Cerutti had previously stated on behalf of BusinessEurope that the EU should leave Member States to regulate platform work autonomously.

BusinessEurope supports a harmonised European-level framework for the Digital Single Market to facilitate market integration. Where full harmonisation is not necessary, the mutual recognition principle should be respected. With respect to the DSA they caution against one-size-fits all solutions, for example Business-to-Business and Business-to-Consumer platforms might need different approaches. Business Europe stresses the need to provide workers with necessary digital skills.

Other criticisms from business associations (such as the Confederation of German Employers' Associations) towards the planned EU initiative on platform workers focus on social and labour policy being the competence of Member States.

According to such criticisms, a European-level re-classification of platform workers would disrupt national systems and cause a lack of legal clarity. Further, businesses are worried about stifling the innovative potential of the platform economy, or putting European platforms at a competitive disadvantage, by imposing pre-mature and extensive regulation.

They caution to respect the diversity of business models in the platform economy.

Key facts on platform work

There is a **distinction between "on-location"** (transportation services, food delivery, domestic work, babysitting etc.) and **"online" platform work** (e.g. IT projects, design work, micro tasks).

According to the most recent online survey data on platform work based on 16 European countries, on average **11% of the working age population across all surveyed countries had ever performed platform work.**

Platforms are (mainly) **a secondary source of income.** Most platform workers are found to be active on more than one platform.

Many platform workers might also have "regular" jobs outside of the platform economy, and **are self-employed on platforms.** Research on platforms finds the majority to be operating with independent contractors.

In the EU, **a third** of online platform work is performed cross-border

Of all online platform work, **80%** is contracted by OECD countries, while only **20%** of the platform workers are OECD country nationals.

Online platform work **grew by over 30%** over a period of less than two years.

Capacity building of social partners

Position of EU social partners on capacity building

EU level social partners reiterate the importance for support to capacity building for social partners at national level and the need to perform a concrete identification of needs.

They also recall the distinctive role of social partners within the EU semester and with regards to the ESF+, mainly as compared to other stakeholders such as NGOs, mainly because of their important role in the labour market, including in relation to employment, the evolution of the world of work, education and training and integration.

Social partners share the Commission's view that an EU level approach as regards capacity building of social partners targeting all MS would not work, and that national challenges are identified in Annex D and should be tackled through the future programmes with an adequate amount of funding.

Position of social partners on ESF+

EU level social partners consider of high importance the fact that the ESF+ explicitly provides aligning funding and policy.

With regards to the link between the ESF+ and the European Semester and the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), they consider that the Action Plan announced by President Von der Leyen does not provide information on how the pillar implementation will be carried out, as well as on the role of the ESF Committee in this matter.

On the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP), social partners are informed that it remains in force for the preparation of the post 2020 programming of the EU funds under cohesion policy and there is no revision foreseen in the near future.

EU level social partners confirm that national social partners are involved in the ongoing informal dialogues that take place on the post 2020 programming of ESF+