

SC6 1 Migration and the refugee crises – Labour market integration, education and skills.

Proposed Call: Migration, labour market diversity and sustainable work

Specific challenge:

The changing European demographic structure implies major challenges for welfare, public health and working life. To sustain economic growth, prosperity and social development, it is crucial to increase the employment participation of migrants, older workers and other neglected groups. Europe's future prosperity and sustainability largely depends on the ability to take advantage of the potential of all generations, including those arriving to Europe after birth.

A society characterized by increasing social, cultural and ethnic diversity as well as changing life styles and values requires new skills and sets of social capital and competencies. A sustainable work system and a more diverse and skilled labour force are core components of the *Innovation Union*. The ongoing demographic transformation in Europe (characterized by an ageing population, shrinking work force and increasing migration) calls for new strategies of social and work related inclusion. New doors have to be opened for migrant workers, elderly workers and other groups with low levels of employment. The three pillars of sustainable development, ecological, economic and social dimensions, are also cornerstones in a strategy of inclusive and reflective societies, but the dimension of sustainable work and sustainable job transitions need to get more attention.

Migration and aging have dynamic interrelations and policy connections. Migrant workers comprise a variety of groups from paperless workers, asylum seekers, posted workers in the context of the service directive to highly skilled professionals working on a European or global labour market. A major part of migrant workers is characterized by precarious working conditions, pressing work environment, low salary and temporary employment, and issues of social protection and labour rights need to be enforced.

Still unemployment in the EU is high since the breakout of the financial crisis in the end of last decade, whereby migrants are especially affected. The crisis in combination with globalisation and rapid technological innovation, has led to a structural change of the economy, where some jobs are lost forever and new jobs will have to take their place. Lay-offs have created slimmed organizations and tougher competition for work, which excludes persons with non-validated knowledge and/or language barriers. Getting migrants into work is the key to successful integration.

Creating new jobs is not enough. To achieve long-term success, it is necessary to bridge the knowledge gap regarding job qualities, social stress and increasing work load for employees with migrant backgrounds in various parts of the labour market. One such field is the expanding private service sector including various forms of jobs with high degrees of ethnic diversity: wholesale and retail trade; transport storage; and communication, social and

personal services; hotels and restaurants; cleaning. The same applies to care of the elderly and social services in general. To meet these challenges, social investments are necessary in the workplace learning and job transition sector through new forms of mentorship, coaching and apprenticeship for adult workers. Another significant innovation area concerns learning training – to promote both the general and occupational language skills.

Scope:

Research activities should address the following areas:

- An analysis of working conditions, work environments, skills development and sustainable job qualities in various labour market sectors, in order to contribute to new social innovations and partnership between public sector, civil society and the market. Research aspects should include work-life balance and gender differences.
- More knowledge is needed on how the skills and occupational background of various groups of migrants and older workers are matching the qualification demands and occupational structures on the labour market. The efficiency of formal employment services needs to be compared with the impact of informal networking. Studies in self-employment at its importance for job creation are central as well as skill levels, wage strategies and employment conditions.
- Identification and analysis of successful policies and programmes encouraging companies and social partners to cooperate in order to better anticipate skills and training needs – including investments in human capital and how to manage the demographic challenges presented in a socially responsible way. Diversity issues (gender, culture, ethnicity, language etc.) should be considered in the context of sustainable quality jobs.
- The impact of social investment in introductory programmes at work for foreign born employees, focusing on labour rights and justice, on language training have to be highlighted. Preparation for occupational skills in formal, non-formal and informal learning environments is another field of interest, e.g. the use of modern digital learning equipment, sector-relevant forms of validation of skills and recognition of prior learning, apprenticeship models for adult workers etc.

Expected impact

- These measures are expected to contribute to enhancing Europe's resilience by identifying successful policies and programmes to manage structural change on a company level – implementing work place sustainability.
- The research will advance knowledge on specific aspects linked to career and task-shifting among migrant workers - as well as technical and vocational education, training to facilitate transition during crisis and increased competitiveness based on improved skills.
- Studies and results from research projects on work organization, new skill requirements and social innovations in sectors with many migrants, will facilitate the on-going social transformation of European societies

- The research activities will contribute to an effective anticipation and restructuring, i.e. practices on early anticipation of human capital needs and subsequent investment to ensure sustained competitiveness of the companies.
- These fundamental societal transformations create great opportunities as well as challenges - raising new demands on the partnership between public sector, the private sector and civil society. An expanding part of the labour market will be staffed by the migrant population for the ageing population.
- New jobs will be created and more knowledge is needed about how to create sustainable working conditions and promote workplace innovation in these sectors. A better integration of migrants and migrant workers in to the labour market and creation of sustainable jobs, is a genuine *win-win* challenge both in a European and national context.

Type of action – RIA

EU added value

This proposal links to the work of DG Employment and DG SANCO as well as three European Agencies; CEDEFOP, Eurofound and OSH-ERA

Support

PEROSH (Partnership for European Research on Occupational Safety and Health)

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