

Brussels, 10 February 2026  
(OR. en)

6189/26

SOC 71  
EMPL 29  
ECOFIN 179  
SAN 79

**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: AOB for the meeting of the EPSCO Council of 9 March 2026:  
Employment Committee work programme for 2026  
*- Information from the EMCO chair*

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Delegations will find attached the Work Programme of the Employment Committee and its subgroups for 2026, as adopted in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 9 March 2026 (Any Other Business item)

# EMCO Work Programme 2026

## 1. Introduction

**The Employment Committee (EMCO) is a Treaty-based advisory committee to the Council of the EU.** The Committee is established in accordance with Art. 150 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and following a Council Decision.<sup>1</sup> It acts as an advisory body to the Employment and Social Affairs Ministers tasked with monitoring the employment situation and employment policies in Member States and the Union, formulating opinions at the request of either the Council or the Commission or on its own initiative, as well as contributing to the preparation of the Council proceedings in the context of the European Semester as outlined in Art. 148 TFEU.

**Every year, the Committee adopts a Work Programme to define its activities.** Accordingly, *Section 2* provides the priorities identified for 2026 in accordance with the broader EU political priorities, *Section 3* outlines the specific activities envisaged throughout the year, *Section 4* indicates the working methods to be employed and highlights the cooperation with other stakeholders, and *Section 5* indicates the tentative calendar for 2026. The Work Programme was discussed on 9 December 2025 and consolidated after the submission of written comments. Following its adoption by the Committee on 19 January, the Work Programme will be presented by the Chair to the EPSCO Ministers of the Council.

**To deliver on its mandate and strategic priorities, the Committee is supported by two subgroups.** In line with their own Work Programmes (in *Annexes 1 and 2*):

- The **Policy Analysis Group (PAG)**, focusing on reviewing the implementation of EU policies at the national level and creating opportunities for regular exchanges with other stakeholders.
- The **Indicators Group (IG)**, focusing on the quantitative description and analysis of relevant policy issues.

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<sup>1</sup> [Council Decision \(EU\) 2015/772](#) of 11 May 2015, repealing [Council Decision 2000/98/EC](#) of 24 January 2000, itself repealing [Council Decision 97/16/EC](#) of 20 December 1996, which originally set an Employment and Labour Market Committee.

## 2. Policy priorities

**The Work Programme is prepared in line with the EU Strategic Agenda 2024-2029 adopted by the European Council<sup>2</sup> and based on the Treaty-based commitments linked to the European Semester.** In this context, the Committee will continue to focus on the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** proclaimed in 2017. In this context, EMCO will continue to **monitor the progress towards the 2030 EU and national targets on employment and skills**, also based on the quantitative work of the IG.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in view of the **forthcoming new European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and the entry into force of the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, the Committee will **stand ready to provide input to the Commission, including by building on its previous strategic reflections.** In March 2024, the Council endorsed an *Opinion on the future EU policy priorities for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights*.<sup>4</sup> In October 2025, the Committee discussed the employment and social aspects of the MFF proposal put forward by the Commission in July.

In 2026, the activities of the Committee will also take into account the **policy priorities of the Cypriot and Irish Presidencies of the Council of the EU, the political guidelines of the 2024-2029 Commission<sup>5</sup>** as well as the related **Commission's annual Work Programme** presented to the Committee on 26 November 2025.

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<sup>2</sup> [Strategic Agenda 2024-2029](#), as adopted by the European Council on 27 June 2024.

<sup>3</sup> The EU headline targets were welcomed by the [European Council on 24-25 June 2021](#), following the [Porto Declaration](#) of 8 May. National targets were formulated by the Member States in cooperation with the European Commission and the national target-setting process was subject of an [EMCO-SPC Opinion on the 2030 national target setting process](#) presented at the EPSCO Council meeting of 16 June 2022.

<sup>4</sup> The [EMCO-SPC Opinion on the future EU policy priorities for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#) was endorsed at the EPSCO Council meeting of 11 March 2024.

<sup>5</sup> The [Political Guidelines for the 2024-2029 Commission](#) were presented on 18 July 2024.

### 3. Specific activities

#### 3.1. Governance of the European Semester

**The European Semester is the framework for integrated surveillance and coordination of economic and employment policies across the European Union.** In light of Art. 148 TFEU, EMCO contributes to the governance of the Semester by preparing the position of the EPSCO Council throughout the year. On the basis of the **2026 European Semester Roadmap**<sup>6</sup>, EMCO will continue to fulfil this mandate by conducting the annual activities referred to in *Table 1* in cooperation with all relevant advisory committees of the Council.<sup>7</sup> The Committee will stand ready to receive information on progress in the negotiations on the next MFF, in light of the expected closer link with the European Semester.

**In 2026, the Committee will discuss the Commission’s recommendation for a first-ever Council Recommendation on human capital in the European Union, based on Art. 148 TFEU.** The Recommendation was announced via the Union of Skills launched on 5 March 2025<sup>8</sup> and published by the Commission via the 2026 Autumn Package. On 26 November 2025, EMCO held an exchange of views on the proposed Recommendation at the presence of the EDUC members. The Committee will examine the text in more detail in view of its possible adoption by the Council in March 2026.

**In the context of the Semester, the IG will continue to support EMCO by producing the 2026 editions of the Annual Employment Performance Report (AEPR) and the Employment Performance Monitor (EPM).**<sup>9</sup> Findings from the EPM will inform the examination of the proposals for the 2026 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) following the publication of the Spring Package expected to be published by the Commission on 3 June 2026. Before the end of the year, also with a view to inform the preparation of the 2027 Autumn Package, the Committee will then submit to the Council a set of Key Messages on the 2026 AEPR and EPM for endorsement.

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<sup>6</sup> The [2026 European Semester Roadmap](#) was presented by the Presidency in December 2025. The Roadmap is updated by the Presidency when necessary during the Semester cycle.

<sup>7</sup> See Section 4.

<sup>8</sup> The [Union of Skills](#) is meant to support the development of human capital in the Union to strengthen EU competitiveness.

<sup>9</sup> See Section 3.4 for more information on the monitoring tools.

Table 1 – Planned activities related to the 2026 European Semester

	<b>Activity in EMCO</b>	<b>Outcome in the Council</b>
<i>Ahead of the March EPSCO Council meeting</i>		
<b>Q4 2025</b>	Examination of the <b>Commission’s recommendation for a 2026 Council Recommendation on the economic policy of the Euro Area</b>	Approval of the <b>employment and social aspects of the 2026 Recommendation on the economic policy of the Euro Area</b>
<b>Q1 2026</b>	Examination of the <b>Commission’s proposal for a 2026 Joint Employment Report</b>	Adoption of the <b>2026 Joint Employment Report</b>  Approval of <b>Council Conclusions on the 2026 Joint Employment Report</b>
<b>Q1 2026</b>	Examination of the <b>Recommendation on Human Capital in the European Union</b>	Adoption of the <b>Recommendation on Human Capital in the European Union</b>
<i>Ahead of the June EPSCO Council meeting</i>		
<b>Q1-Q2 2026</b>	Multilateral surveillance of the <b>implementation of the 2025 Country-Specific Recommendations</b>	Endorsement of a <b>Horizontal Opinion on the 2026 European Semester cycle</b>
<b>Q2 2026</b>	Examination of the <b>Commission’s proposals for 2026 Country-Specific Recommendations</b>	Approval of the <b>2026 Country-Specific Recommendations</b>
<i>Ahead of the October EPSCO Council meeting</i>		
<b>Q3 2026</b>	Adoption of the <b>2026 Annual Employment Performance Report</b> and the <b>Employment Performance Monitor</b>	Endorsement of <b>Key Messages on the 2026 Annual Employment Performance Report and Employment Performance Monitor</b>
<b>Q3-Q4 2026</b>	Examination of the <b>Commission’s proposal to revise or carry over Employment Guidelines</b>	Adoption by the Council of the <b>2026 Employment Guidelines</b>

**In addition to the annual activities listed in *Table 1*, the Committee will also support the Council in preparing deliberations related to the governance of the European Semester and the coordination of employment policies, based on recent developments:**

- Following the introduction of the **Social Convergence Framework** in recent European Semester cycles, the Committee will contribute to its implementation also in 2026 by discussing the forthcoming Commission’s second-stage analysis and reporting findings on the state of social convergence in the EU to the Council.<sup>10</sup>
- Following the entering into force of EU Regulation 2024/1263<sup>11</sup> and after having discussed the relevant aspects of the **Medium-Term Fiscal-Structural Plans** and contributed to the preparation of Council Recommendations endorsing their content, the Committee will take stock of the state of implementation of the plans via the **2026 Annual Progress Reports**.

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<sup>10</sup> In cooperation with SPC, between 2022 and 2023 the Committee formulated an [Opinion](#) and [Key Messages](#) on the possible introduction of a Social Convergence Framework in the European Semester. The Key Messages summarised the [technical work conducted by an EMCO-SPC working group](#) active between September 2022 and May 2023. At the end of the 2024, EMCO and SPC carried out an [assessment of the Social Convergence Framework as implemented on a pilot basis in the 2024 European Semester cycle](#).

<sup>11</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1263](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2024 on the effective coordination of economic policies and on multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97. Art. 28(2) includes EMCO among the relevant Committees to be consulted where appropriate.

- Following the endorsement by the Council of the *Opinion on the value added of social investment and the role of the EPSCO Council filière in the European Semester*<sup>12</sup> and of the *Voluntary guiding principles for EU Member States*<sup>13</sup>, the Committee will stand ready to further discuss the **economic effects of reforms and investments in the labour market, skills and social policy domains**, in line with the *Council Conclusions on the role of labour market, skills and social policies for resilient economies*.<sup>14</sup> As a follow-up, between June and October 2025, the Commission presented its plans for the establishment of a ‘Social Investment Knowledge Hub’<sup>15</sup> and an informal working group on enhancing access to administrative data for evaluation purposes.<sup>16</sup>
- Following the endorsement by the Council of the *Opinion on the dimensions of job quality*<sup>17</sup>, the Committee looks forward to the completion of the technical work being carried out by the IG to establish a robust **monitoring framework on job quality** in the context of the Semester.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The [Opinion on the value added of social investment and the role of the EPSCO Council filière in the European Semester](#) was endorsed at the EPSCO Council meeting of 28 November 2023.

<sup>13</sup> The [Voluntary guiding principles for EU Member States for evaluating economic effects of reforms and investments in the labour market, skills and social policy domains](#) were endorsed at the EPSCO Council meeting of 20 June 2024.

<sup>14</sup> The [Council Conclusions on the role of labour market, skills and social policies for resilient economies](#) were approved at the EPSCO Council meeting of 20 June 2024. The conclusions invited (i.) the Commission to consult EMCO and SPC on the design and mandate of a possible “knowledge hub” on the methods and techniques to measure the economic effects of labour market, skills and social policies; and (ii.) EMCO and SPC to continue the work on evaluating and monitoring the economic effects of labour market, skills and social policies, including by building on the above-mentioned voluntary guiding principles.

<sup>15</sup> The ‘Social Investment Knowledge Hub’ will be managed by the Commission services. It will include (i.) the organisation of mutual learning events to provide opportunities to exchange experiences and good practices on policy design and evaluation; (ii.) the creation of a [dedicated website](#) to collect information and best practices on reforms and investments with both economic and social returns; and (iii.) possible thematic discussions to be proposed to EMCO and SPC, or their indicators groups, on the economic and social returns of specific measures.

<sup>16</sup> The informal working group on enhancing access to administrative data for evaluation purposes will be managed by the Commission services, with Member States participating on a voluntary basis and activities starting in 2026.

<sup>17</sup> The [Opinion on the dimensions of job quality](#) was presented at the EPSCO Council meeting of 19 June 2025.

<sup>18</sup> The Opinion mandated the IG to update the existing monitoring framework (as used in the [“Job Quality module” included in the 2017 Employment Performance Monitor](#)) by the first

### 3.2. Multilateral surveillance

To examine the implementation of employment policies, as mandated by Art. 148 and 150 TFEU, the Committee engages in annual multilateral surveillance (MLS) activities consisting of peer reviews. EMCO will assess the implementation of past CSRs issued by the Council within the European Semester (on an annual basis), with the horizontal and country-specific conclusions to be included in the annual **Horizontal Opinion on the European Semester** submitted to the Council for endorsement in June. Moreover, it will assess the implementation of the **Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU** (every two years, starting in 2026) with contributions from social partners and with Key Messages submitted to the Council for endorsement.<sup>19</sup> In 2026, the Committee will be consulted on the structure of a joint Commission-OECD questionnaire aimed at collecting information on the implementation of the **Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions**.<sup>20</sup> PAG will contribute to the multilateral surveillance activities of the Committees by monitoring progress on the implementation of **any other relevant Council Recommendations addressed to all Member**, with each discussed every two years.<sup>21</sup>

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quarter of 2026 to identify the most appropriate indicators to measure the policy dimensions of job quality. On 16 October 2025, the IG completed the first phase of its work, focusing on agreeing on existing or easily computable indicators.

<sup>19</sup> On 25 September 2025, the Committee agreed that, as of 2026, its Social Dialogue Review will monitor the implementation of the 2023 Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU across all Member States, with national social partners invited to participate, thereby making the review fully tripartite. In this context, on 23 October 2025, the Committee also adopted an [Opinion on improving the scope and relevance of data collection at Union and national level on social dialogue](#), as prepared by the IG and endorsed by the Council at the EPSCO meeting of 1 December 2025.

<sup>20</sup> The [Recommendation](#) invites (i.) Member States to report to the Commission on their progress by 2027 (*Paragraph 27*); and (ii.) the Commission to prepare a report on the evaluation of the actions taken in response to the Recommendation to be submitted to EMCO and SPC for discussion (*Paragraph 23(c)*). On 8 December 2025, to address these invitations, the Commission proposed to develop a questionnaire, with the support of the OECD, to be submitted to EMCO and the SPC for agreement in 2026. The questionnaire would cover the key provisions of both the Council Recommendation and the related OECD recommendations on social economy. Based on the Member States' replies to the questionnaire, as well as other existing data, the Commission and the OECD will prepare a joint analytical report for discussion in EMCO and SPC in 2027 or 2028.

<sup>21</sup> The full list of Council Recommendations monitored by PAG is enclosed in *Annex 1*.

### 3.3. Thematic work

**EMCO will continue to schedule thematic discussions according to relevant socioeconomic developments, the priorities of the Cypriot (January – June) and Irish Presidencies (July – December), as well to provide orientations to forthcoming Commission initiatives.** The thematic work of EMCO will continue to be supported by PAG, in line with its own Work Programme (in *Annex I*), including by organising an annual tripartite meeting with EU and national social partners from all Member States on issues of common interest. To prepare thematic discussions, the Secretariat will liaise with relevant Commission services, international organisations and other stakeholders which can be invited to present relevant analytical contributions, case studies and reports.

**In 2026, based on the 2024-2029 political priorities of the Commission and ahead of a possible new European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the Committee will stand ready to discuss forthcoming EU initiatives.** These may include the actions in the *Quality Jobs Roadmap*, the *Fair Labour Mobility Package* and the first-ever *EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*. Pending new inputs by the Commission, EMCO will also take stock of the situation of persons with disabilities in the labour market, in line with the related calls by the Council and the Commission to set up employment targets for persons with disabilities.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Namely in the [Council Conclusions on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market](#), approved at the EPSCO Council meeting of 8 December 2022, and in the [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#), published by the Commission on 3 March 2021.

### 3.4. Monitoring tools

**The activities of EMCO will continue to be supported by the IG via the quantitative description and analysis of relevant policy issues.** In line with its own Work Programme (in *Annex 2*), the IG will rely on the existing monitoring and reporting tools developed in the past years, namely the Social Scoreboard, the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF), the Employment Performance Monitor (EPM), the Annual Employment Performance Report (AEPR) and its Key Messages. In this context, the IG will continue monitoring the progress towards the 2030 EU headline and national targets on employment and adult learning based on agreed methodologies.<sup>23</sup> The IG will also continue to reflect on an overall adjustment of its monitoring tools.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the IG will continue to support the adaptation of monitoring frameworks and the exploration of relevant indicators that could support the PAG reviews from a quantitative perspective.

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<sup>23</sup> In October 2022, the IG agreed on a methodology to monitor the EU headline and national targets on employment. Moreover, in June 2024, the IG reached a provisional agreement on the methodology for the monitoring of the progress towards the 2030 headline and national targets in the area of adult learning. More information is provided in the IG Work Programme.

<sup>24</sup> On 15 November 2022, the IG launched a reflection on the monitoring tools at the disposal of the Committee. The exercise follows the conclusions of the [EMCO-SPC assessment on the Europe 2020 Strategy](#) prepared in 2019. More information on the state of play is provided in the IG Work Programme.

#### 4. Working methods and cooperation with stakeholders

**In fulfilling its Treaty-based mandate and implementing the Work Programme, the Secretariat will schedule a mix of physical<sup>25</sup> and virtual meetings across EMCO, PAG and IG, and will continue to cooperate with other advisory committees of the Council.** It will strive to develop synergies and ensure coordination within the European Semester – as well as on broader policy issues of joint interest – with the Social Protection Committee (SPC), the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC), the Economic Policy Committee (EPC) and the Education Committee (EDUC). The Committee will be represented by the Chair at the meetings of the EPSCO Council, the informal meetings of the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs organised by the Council Presidency, the Macroeconomic Dialogue at Technical Level (MED-TECH), as well as within the governing board of the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network).

**The Committee and its subgroups will also collaborate closely with other relevant stakeholders, such as the EEA/EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the social partners.** As of 2024, the EEA/EFTA States are invited to attend relevant thematic discussions organised in PAG.<sup>26</sup> Regarding the social partners, in November 2023, the Committee agreed to invite the EU Social Partners to attend relevant thematic discussions organised in EMCO and to organise annual tripartite discussions with national social partners in PAG to reinforce the institutional dialogue among the Member States, the Commission and the social partners at all levels.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Expenses for the participation to physical meetings will be reimbursed by the European Commission via the [AGM system](#) in accordance with the administrative rules in force and the limitations explained on the website. For each physical meeting, delegates from national public administrations (maximum two per Member State) receive a reimbursement of travel expenses.

<sup>26</sup> In line with the PAG Terms of Reference, according to which the group “*should seek to establish a pool of observers at technical level*”.

<sup>27</sup> In response to the Commission’s invitation made in the [Communication on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union—harnessing its full potential for managing transitions](#) published on 25 January 2023.

**The EMCO, PAG and IG members can freely access the following via the CIRCABC platform<sup>28</sup>:**

- **Council Decision (EU) 2015/772 of 11 May 2015** establishing the Employment Committee and repealing Decision 2000/98/EC;
- **Rules of Procedure**, as amended on 22 September 2017;
- **Privacy statement**, as circulated on 11 September 2023;
- **Membership lists for EMCO, PAG and IG**, which are updated indicatively every 3 months;
- **Official documents** circulated ahead of and after each meeting.

## 5. Calendar of EMCO meetings scheduled in 2026

**The calendar is provisional and subject to changes. For each physical meeting, delegates are invited to book their travel arrangements only upon receipt of the draft agenda.** Extraordinary videoconference meetings can be planned according to the needs of the group and in line with the Work Programme. The list of main topics for each meeting mostly presents the timeline for the presentation and adoption of regular deliverables and it is not exhaustive. Any calendar updates will be communicated in writing by the Secretariat when needed.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Items</b>
<b>19-20 January</b>	Brussels, BE	<i>19 January:</i> - Anti-Poverty Strategy – Consultation - 2026 Work Programme – Adoption <i>20 January:</i> - Council Recommendation on Human Capital in the EU – Drafting session
<b>3-4 February</b>	Brussels, BE	<i>3 February:</i> - Council Recommendation on Human Capital in the EU – Drafting session <i>4 February (joint with SPC):</i> - 2026 Joint Employment Report – Drafting session and adoption - Council Conclusions on the 2026 Joint Employment Report – Drafting session and adoption

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<sup>28</sup> The EMCO members are invited to regularly consult documents on the [EMCO Library on CIRCABC](#).

<i>Informal EPSCO – 12-13 February</i>		
<b>16-17 February</b>	Larnaca, CY	<i>TBD</i>
<b>EPSCO – 9 March</b>		
<b>18-19 March</b>	Brussels, BE	- CSR reviews
<b>28-29 April</b>	Brussels, BE	- CSR reviews
<b>19-20 May</b>	Brussels, BE	<i>(Joint with SPC)</i> - Social Convergence Reviews
<b>4-5 June</b>	Webex videoconference	<i>(Joint with SPC)</i> - 2026 Spring Package – Exchange of views
<b>16-17-18 June</b>	Brussels, BE	<i>(Joint with SPC)</i> - 2026 CSRs – Negotiations
<b>TBD</b>	TBD	<i>(Joint with SPC and EPC)</i> - 2026 CSRs – Negotiations
<b>EPSCO – 29 June</b>		
<i>Informal EPSCO – 6-7 July</i>		
<b>24-25 September</b>	Dublin, IE	<i>TBD</i>
<b>7-8 October</b>	Brussels, BE	<i>(With EU and national social partners)</i> - 2026 Social Dialogue Review
<b>EPSCO – 19 October</b>		
<b>26-27 November</b>	Brussels, BE	<i>(Joint with SPC)</i> - 2027 Autumn Package – Exchange of views
<b>EPSCO – 7 December</b>		
<b>8 December</b>	Webex videoconference	<i>(Joint with SPC)</i> - 2027 Euro Area Recommendation – Drafting session and adoption - 2027 Work Programme

**EMCO Policy Analysis Group – Work Programme 2026**

**The Policy Analysis Group (PAG) supports EMCO in promoting coordination among Member States on employment and skills policies.** While EMCO retains responsibility for formulating opinions for the Council and the Commission, and for contributing to the preparation of Council proceedings related to the European Semester in line with Articles 148 and 150 TFEU, PAG may be tasked with preparing elements of its deliberations.

**The PAG activities should not, as a rule, overlap with the high-level policy guidance formulated in EMCO, nor with the quantitative analytical work carried out in the IG.** In this context, PAG should provide a forum for evidence-based discussion on relevant policy issues, creating opportunities for regular exchanges with key stakeholders. This may include presentations and discussions of good practices at national level, with a view to sharing knowledge and experience among countries facing similar challenges.

**In line with these objectives, PAG conducts the following main activities:**

- (i.) *Tripartite meetings with EU and national social partners*

**Tripartite PAG meetings, with representatives of EU-level and national social partners invited, should contribute directly to the thematic work of EMCO.** They provide opportunities to exchange views at EU level on policy areas in which social partners play a crucial role in shaping and implementing solutions at national level.<sup>29</sup> The outcome of these meetings should be reported back to EMCO and - when appropriate - presented to the Council. The focus of the tripartite meeting scheduled for 2026 will be on the gender-related aspects of job quality. This may include the prevalence of part-time work among women, sectoral segregation, the gender pay gap, as well as differences in career progression between men and women, often stemming from the unequal distribution of care responsibilities.

- (ii.) *Multilateral surveillance reviews of Council Recommendations*

**The PAG reviews should contribute to EMCO's multilateral surveillance activities, focusing on Council Recommendations addressed to all Member States.** Each Recommendation listed in *Table 2* should be monitored every two years, with PAG alternating their assessment and preparing EMCO Key Messages to inform the Council's examination.<sup>30</sup> According to this alternation, in 2026, PAG will review the implementation of the Council Recommendations on the *integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (LTU)* and on *individual learning accounts (ILA)*.

**The calendar of PAG meetings planned for 2026 is set out in *Table 3*.**

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<sup>29</sup> In recent years, tripartite meetings have been organised on labour and skills shortages (November 2023, in EMCO), the labour market integration of persons with disabilities (June 2024), and the implementation of the 2024 Action Plan on labour and skills shortages (March 2025).

<sup>30</sup> The reviews on the implementation of the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) issued within the framework of the European Semester is organised in EMCO in light of their links with the definition of priorities and policy guidance at EU level.

Table 2 - Council Recommendations reviewed by the Policy Analysis Group

Adoption by the Council	Council Recommendation	Reviews conducted since adoption	Next planned reviews
15 February 2016	Integration of long-term unemployed in the labour market (LTU) <sup>31</sup>	2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024	2026, 2028
16 June 2022	Individual learning accounts (ILA) <sup>32</sup>	2024	2026, 2028
16 June 2022	Ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality (FT) <sup>33</sup>	2023, 2025	2027, 2029
22 April 2013 and 30 October 2020	Youth Guarantee (YG) <sup>34</sup>	2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2025	2027, 2029

Table 3 - Calendar PAG meetings scheduled in 2026

Date	Location	Items
14 January	Webex videoconference	- 2026 Work Programme – Exchange of views
24-25 March	Brussels, BE	- Tripartite meeting with social partners
20-21 October	Brussels, BE	- Review on the Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts
17-18 November	Brussels, BE	- Review on the Council Recommendation on the integration of long-term unemployed
3 December	Webex videoconference	- 2027 Work Programme – Exchange of views

<sup>31</sup> [Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016](#) on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

<sup>32</sup> [Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022](#) on individual learning accounts.

<sup>33</sup> [Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022](#) on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality.

<sup>34</sup> [Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020](#) on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the [Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013](#) on establishing a Youth Guarantee.

## EMCO Indicators Group – Work Programme 2026

### A) EMCO Indicators Group Core Business

In 2026, the EMCO Indicators Group (EMCO IG) will continue to contribute to delivering on the EMCO priorities and to support the Committee in the quantitative description and analysis of relevant policy issues.

In light of the 2025 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen and the Commission's 2026 Work Programme, the EMCO IG stands ready to support EMCO in any relevant activities the Committee will undertake in 2026, including in the context of the Quality Jobs Roadmap and the follow-up to the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. The impact of any new activities that EMCO decides to undertake in the course of 2026 will be assessed and the EMCO IG work programme will be adjusted as necessary.

The broad EMCO priorities imply that the EMCO IG will continue to support the surveillance and monitoring capacities of EMCO in various ways.

### European Semester and monitoring of the European Pillar of Social Rights

- The EMCO IG will discuss the analytical content of the Proposal for a Joint Employment Report, jointly with the Social Protection Committee Indicators Subgroup (SPC ISG).
- The EMCO IG will continue to reflect on EMCO's monitoring and reporting tools with a view to further streamlining and simplifying them, taking into account synergies with other monitoring tools. In addition, the EMCO IG could discuss ways to enhance the visibility and outreach of EMCO tools.

- It will continue the review of the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) policy areas, as necessary, with a view to better aligning them with the Employment Guidelines, and to updating the JAF indicators. In this context, the EMCO IG will hold discussions to identify reliable and appropriate indicators for areas such as labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities, green jobs, and skills mismatches, among others.
- The EMCO IG will continue cooperating, as necessary, with the SPC ISG in areas of joint competence, concerning the reflection on and the simplification and consolidation of the monitoring and reporting tools, including the JAF, the structure and content of the JAF policy areas, and its methodology, as well as in relation to the Social Scoreboard.
- Pending possible deliberations on streamlining the monitoring tools:
  - The EMCO IG will produce the 2026 Employment Performance Monitor (EPM), to monitor the progress towards the 2030 EU and national employment and adult learning targets and identify the key employment challenges and good labour market outcomes of the Member States and the EU as a whole.
  - It will produce the 2026 EMCO Annual Employment Performance Report (AEPR) as well as the related Key Messages, which will represent EMCO's contribution to the preparation of the 2027 Semester Autumn Package.
- The EMCO IG will, in relation to the 2030 EU and national targets on adult participation in learning, discuss the EU-LFS adult learning data (published in April 2025) and the differences with the AES data, preparing for a decision on a possible transition to LFS data for measuring progress.
- The EMCO IG, in cooperation with the SPC ISG, will discuss how to best assess the employment of persons with disabilities, and whether the disability employment gap should be measured through the LFS or whether it should remain based on the EU-SILC.

- The EMCO IG will regularly review policy fields identified as lacking appropriate indicators, such as undeclared work and bogus self-employment, the social economy, new forms of work, among others, notably in case of relevant statistical developments, with a view to improving their monitoring at EU level.

### **Job Quality Monitoring Framework**

Following the mandate set out in the EMCO Opinion on the dimensions of job quality, presented to the June 2025 EPSCO Council, the EMCO IG decided in 2025 to structure its work to update the existing job quality monitoring framework in two phases, with overall completion foreseen by the first quarter of 2026.

Having successfully completed phase 1 in October 2025, which focused on discussing and agreeing on existing indicators and other easily computable ones to monitor the job quality dimensions outlined in the annex of the EMCO Opinion, the Group will proceed with phase 2.

Phase 2 will focus on indicators for some job quality dimensions that may need further or more complex work and on dimensions that remain uncovered due to lack of appropriate data sources and indicators, such as dimension 13 on ‘Undeclared or underdeclared work as work to be eliminated’.

The EMCO IG will also discuss and finalise the input to be provided by the SPC ISG on the indicators to monitor the job quality dimension on social protection, similarly to the practice followed under phase 1.

### **Monitoring of Council Recommendations**

The EMCO IG will continue its work on analysing the results of the data collections on monitoring the Council Recommendations on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee (2020) and on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (2016). When necessary, the EMCO IG will review the pertinent Indicator Frameworks.

Having fulfilled its mandate to prepare an Opinion on the possibility to improve the scope and relevance of data collection at Union and national level on social dialogue, including on collective bargaining, adopted by EMCO at its meeting on 23-24 October 2025 and endorsed by the EPSCO Council on 1 December 2025, the EMCO IG stands ready to carry out any follow-up work, supporting the EMCO Social Dialogue Review foreseen in 2026.

If needed, the EMCO IG will continue discussing and working on the monitoring aspects of the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on individual learning accounts (2022/C 243/03) and the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality (2022/C 243/04). Furthermore, if needed, the EMCO IG will undertake any follow-up work, as relevant, on the monitoring aspects of the Council Recommendation on access to affordable high quality long-term care, in cooperation with the SPC ISG.

### **Employment indicators for monitoring of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The EMCO IG will continue following up and supporting the work carried out by the Commission on employment indicators for monitoring the UN Sustainable Developments Goals and contribute as necessary to the further development of the indicators in this area.

### **Social investment**

Following the Jumbo EPSCO-ECOFIN Council organised under the Belgian Presidency on 12 March 2024 to discuss the interplay between social investment, economic growth and fiscal sustainability, and the approval by the EPSCO Council in June 2024 of the Council Conclusions prepared by EMCO and SPC on the role of labour market, skills and social policies for resilient economies, the EMCO IG stands ready to carry out any work to be mandated by EMCO as a follow-up to the Council Conclusions.

## **Other methodological and analytical issues**

Following the agreed transition from the OECD TAXBEN to the in-house Euromod Hypothetical Household Tool (HHoT) indicators in 2025, with the support of the Commission (particularly the JRC), the EMCO IG may need to provide feedback on further developments of the Euromod HHoT and its applications.

The EMCO IG will continue, when necessary, its work on monitoring multidimensional policy concepts.

Moreover, the EMCO IG will look at the results of evaluation studies, especially on the impact of ESF+ financed measures in the context of employment policies and the effectiveness of labour market policies.

In addition, the EMCO IG will be informed about the work of the informal working group on “Enhancing access to administrative data for policy evaluation and impact assessment purposes” managed by the Commission.

### **B) Working Methods**

The main discussions of the EMCO IG take place during its scheduled meetings. In order to facilitate the discussion and to allow Members to prepare adequately for the meeting, documents, including meeting agendas, will be sent sufficiently in advance of the meeting, when possible.

Written procedures can be helpful before or after meetings, for instance, when agreements need to be reached prior to the next scheduled meeting or when documents are circulated too close to the meeting date. However, written procedures should complement, not replace, regular group discussions.

On the organisation of the meetings, a mix of physical and virtual meetings has been established. In-person meetings will in particular be preferred for full day meetings or when they are joint with the SPC ISG. When the number of agenda items does not justify full-day meetings, written procedures and/or videoconferences will be preferred. For any physical meeting, delegates are invited to book their travel arrangements only upon receipt of the draft agenda via email.

Building on past successful experiences, the EMCO IG could envisage organising *ad hoc* working groups consisting of a few Member States to develop proposals to be discussed in the EMCO IG concerning specific areas of the EMCO IG work such as revising/developing a policy area or developing indicators for monitoring a specific subject.

### **C) Co-operation with other Committees and institutions**

The EMCO IG will continue to cooperate closely with all other relevant groups or committees, particularly on work related to the JAF and the Social Scoreboard for monitoring of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The EMCO IG Chair and the Secretariat will regularly update the Members on relevant work carried out in the other committees.

In addition to the close cooperation with the SPC ISG (notably in the context of the work on the JAF, the Joint Employment Report and the Social Scoreboard), the EMCO IG will cooperate, as necessary, with the Eurostat Working Group on Labour Market Statistics (LAMAS), the LIME Working Group of the Economic Policy Committee, the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB), the Labour Market Policy statistics groups (expert group and task force) and the PES Network (focusing on their PES bench-learning in particular on the effectiveness of labour market policies), as well as with the European Platform tackling undeclared work.

The EMCO IG will continue to promote cooperation with other institutions and bodies carrying out work in the area of analysis of the labour market, including CEDEFOP, EUROFOUND, and international organisations such as ILO and OECD. It will also monitor research of potential interest for its work, especially through cooperation with several services of the Commission.

### **D) Provisional meetings for 2026**

The calendar below is provisional and subject to changes. The list of agenda items for each possible meeting mostly presents the timeline for the presentation and/or adoption of the regular deliverables of the EMCO IG and is not exhaustive. The list of items to be discussed at the meetings will be further developed and finalised closer to the meetings.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Provisional agenda items</b>
22 January	IG-only and IG/ISG	Brussels	<b>IG-only:</b> Job Quality Monitoring Framework Monitoring the adult learning 2030 target (TBC) EPM roadmap <b>IG/ISG session:</b> Draft Joint Employment Report (2026)
13 February	IG	Virtual	Job Quality Monitoring Framework
2 March (extraordinary meeting)	IG	Virtual	Job Quality Monitoring Framework
27 March	IG	Virtual	Job Quality Monitoring Framework: Finalisation of phase two 2026 EPM: Adoption of non JAF-based KECs
29 May	IG	Virtual	EPM 2026 finalisation
30 June (If needed)	IG	Virtual	
Week 14-18 or week 21-25 September (dates TBC) <i>[depending on the EMCO meeting hosted by the Presidency]</i>	IG	Brussels	2025 AEPR agreement – finalisation of related Key Messages
Week 19-23 or week 26-30 October (date TBC)	IG	Virtual	EU SDG indicator set review in view of the “Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context”
November (if needed) - date TBC	IG	Virtual	
15-16 December	IG-only and IG/ISG	Brussels	<b>IG-only:</b> 2026 ISG Work Programme – finalization YG/LTU data collection first results <b>IG/ISG session:</b> Proposal for a Joint Employment Report (2027)

At least two joint EMCO IG-SPC ISG meetings are now scheduled to be organised in 2026.

Extraordinary virtual or in-person meetings (IG-only and/or IG-ISG joint sessions) can be planned according to the needs of the group and in line with the policy agenda.