



26 concrete demands to direct EFBWW priorities in the coming 12 months

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a European and global sanitary, social and economic crisis.

It will have an enormous impact on our industries in the coming years. Our Strategic Plan and the resolutions which the General Assembly adopted are still valid. But in the light of the current crisis we need to re-focus. The EFBWW political COVID-19 motion addresses some of these concerns. The concrete demands presented here complement the motion.

The EFBWW set up a specific COVID-19 webpage to assist affiliates to share their experiences and good examples. The EFBWW has also agreed on joint positions with the European employer federations in our industries to address the most urgent needs for workers and companies and launched a first joint appeal for recovery measures. Together with the ETUC and ETUF's, the EFBWW has developed joint positions and joint lobby efforts to tackle different sanitary, social, economic aspects of the crisis.

Our industries are crucial for a quick economic recovery and a just transition towards a carbon neutral society in 2050. There will be no sustainable recovery without full participation of trade unions.

Occupational Health & Safety

The COVID-19 crisis endangers the health of workers in all aspects of the working life. Sound protection strategies are essential for workplaces and work related activities of all type of employees for the fight against the virus. Precarious workers are particularly vulnerable. The social partners – supported by policy makers – must adopt a strategy and coordinated action. It must be tailor-made for the specific working conditions. We also need the adaptation of the EU OSH law, especially the revision of the biological agents' directive.

What we demand:

- The implementation, surveillance and enforcement of existing H&S rules with special regard to Covid-19 risks. An enforcement of the role of trade unions on the work place related to H&S matters. An enforcement of national labour inspectorates and a significantly increased number of controls to protect all workers.
- Protection measures for all aspects of the working conditions and related activities with comprehensive involvement of worker representatives and trade unions.
- An updated concept for the risk assessment of working conditions, including the significantly increased share of home office work and related mental health risks.
- A revision of Recommendation 2003/670/EC concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases to specifically include Covid-19 and applying to all workers disproportionately exposed to infection risks.

What we will do:

- Support our affiliates by sharing best practices online and through the work of the OH&S coordination group
- Support our affiliates to enforce a “protect and prevent” strategy: No return to work without clear H&S standards at the workplace, including a risk assessment and measures to avoid a rebound.
- Lobby jointly with the ETUC and the other ETUFs for the recognition of COVID-19 as an occupational disease.
- Lobby jointly with the ETUC and the other ETUFs for the inclusion of the [Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2](#) into group 4 of Annex four of the Biological Agents Directive that deals with the protection of workers against biological substances, including viruses.

Democracy at work and social dialogue

The COVID-19 crisis has affected all workers and companies, but this impact differs a lot across sectors. The management of the crisis clearly demonstrates that autonomous sectoral industrial relations are a powerful, effective and efficient tool to manage crises and to achieve social progress and tackle specific needs and challenges.

What we demand:

- The ambitious implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) as a flagship social initiative of the European Commission which commits the EU to a “Social Triple A”. *Fundamental principles of the EPSR such as ‘Equal Opportunities and Access to the Labour Market’ (Chapter I), ‘Fair Working Conditions’ (Chapter II), and ‘Social Protection and Inclusion’ (Chapter III)* require that all Member States acknowledge, foster, promote and support national sectoral industrial relations.
- Extra European funding to support and to strengthen social dialogue on company, sectoral, national and European level and a European framework to protect and facilitate sectoral collective bargaining and fundamental collective rights of trade unions, including the right to access worksites, to organise, to be informed and consulted and to participate in decision-making, and to take industrial action on national and EU level.
- A revised and strengthened European framework for information and consultation in multinational companies. EWCs must be actively involved in all decision taking related to the COVID-19 crisis. Effective and dissuasive sanctions must be in place to enforce workers representatives’ rights enshrined in the EWC directive and the national law implementing it.
- A revised and strengthened European framework for transnational company restructuring and the implementation and enforcement of existing workers representatives’ and union rights in this regard.
- Revision of the European Framework Directive on Occupational Safety and Health (89/391) and the Directives on the information and consultation of workers to ensure the comprehensive worker’s participation in any OSH measures of companies, including the right to initiatives in this field.

What we will do:

- Monitor the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on membership figures. Support the exchange of best practices of organising between affiliates with a focus on recruiting new members and retention of members.
- Further develop our Corona webpage to assist affiliates in sharing good practices in tackling the COVID-19 crisis in our industries.

- Through the OH&S coordination group, exchange and develop good practices to support and foster representation of worker representatives and trade unions in all aspects of the companies OSH policy and foster concepts of direct participation of workers.
- Together with ETUC and ETUF's lobby for an urgent revision of the EWC Directive and the Directives related to information and consultation in the case of transnational restructuring.
- Through the EFBWW EWC coordinators, we will support EWCs and transnational trade union networks in our industries to anticipate Covid-19 related measures in MNCs: Holding up H&S standards across borders, a coordinated trade union responses to the forecasted COVID-19 restructuring wave and the prevention of massive layoffs are on the top of the agenda.
- Together with the European employer federations in our industries, we will contact the European Commission to demand more financial support for the sectoral social dialogue in our industries on company, sectoral, national and European level.
- Together with the European employer federations in our industries we will demand an active role of the European sectoral social partners in the management of the COVID-19 crisis on European level and in the European relaunch strategy afterwards.
- Continue to promote and foster the industrial relations in the construction and wood and furniture industries Central, East and South-East Europe.

Economic Relaunch of our industries

We cannot go back to business as usual after this crisis. We want a paradigm shift towards an economic rationality based on sustainable investment for economic stability and social cohesion. Existing business models based on precarious work, social abuse and fraud must be abandoned. We want sustainable jobs and businesses. Workers organisations must be involved in the design and the implementation of new industrial models for all our sectors. The European Green Deal should be a starting point for the economic relaunch and just transition of our industries. The relaunch of our industries should be built on social progress.

What we demand:

- An ambitious investment plan for new European infrastructure and to update and maintain existing infrastructure.
- Speeding up the start of the Renovation wave with specific attention to affordable housing and initiatives to combat energy poverty.
- An ambitious, social European Green Deal connected to a well-financed COVID-19 recovery strategy, designed as a just transition instrument to the benefit of the workers in all our industries, and especially the more energy-intensive sectors.
- All public and private investments made as part of the recovery measures should create direct employment and stable jobs.

What we will do:

- Adopt the EGD position paper and lobby for an ambitious and social Green Deal to implement a just transition towards a carbon neutral Europe in 2050.
- Active participation in the Renovate Europe alliance and lobby for an acceleration of the renovation rate in member states.
- Task the collective bargaining working group of the Standing Committee Building with preparing an inclusive and ambitious policy paper on the Future of Work in the construction industry.
- Discuss the challenges of digitalisation at a special meeting of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee of the construction industry.

- Present an updated policy paper on a progressive European industry policy for the Forest Based Industries.
- Together with ETUI organise a training seminar for our affiliates on the EGD and the impact of digitalisation in our industries.

Equal treatment – fair mobility for all workers

The COVID-19 crisis has once again demonstrated the dichotomy of the European labour market. The growing precarisation in our industries has shown its most ugly side in this crisis. There is a growing number of posted workers, bogus self-employed, zero-hour contracts, on-call contracts, temporary agency workers, mini-jobs and freelancers. The fundamental principle of "equal pay for equal work in the same workplace" does not apply to many workers with precarious working conditions. And the so-called coordination of social security systems proved for many posted workers to be fiction. Posted workers often work and live in places where no social distancing is possible. Some are sent home in packed buses; others could not work because they were put in confinement. Isolation and precarisation, the lack of transparency and very limited access to information, consultation and assistance and reduced inspections is part of their reality. This is totally unacceptable. We demand full equal treatment and a strong social protection for all workers.

What we demand:

- Strengthened national short-term work schemes, which should be inclusive, adequate and available as long as needed. On EU level, SURE must be adopted and implemented as quick as possible and with the support of all Member States. In a second step, the Commission should swiftly introduce the proposal for the European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme.
- A swift implementation of the Directive on Transparent and predictable working conditions (2019/1152) to ensure that all workers are entitled to proper information regarding their wages, working conditions, health and safety standards, professional training standards and all other workers' rights on information, consultation, to organize and to industrial action.
- Stronger measures against undeclared labour and Income protection for workers in the undeclared economy who have no access to support schemes to avoid that these workers are pushed in poverty or are obliged to work in very unsafe and unhealthy conditions.
- The ambitious and swift transposition of the Posting of Workers Directive (PWD) in all Member States with the active involvement of (sectoral) trade unions.
- Urgent initiatives to increase OH&S for posted workers taking into account their specific working and living conditions.
- To allow posting of workers only in a strictly controlled and enforced environment, based on equal rights for workers and clear obligations for the companies.
- New clarifications and enforcement tools to ensure that posting is only an exceptional temporary activity, as foreseen in the PWD.
- Interdiction to organise posting via intermediaries, such as temporary work agencies.
- An improved European system of cross-border social security with better information, and better monitoring and enforcement tools to provide better social protection and fight cross-border social fraud.
- A fair European cross-border employment system with optimal cooperation between all national inspection services and trade unions. The European Labour Authority (ELA) should become operational as soon as possible.
- A new European framework for decent and high quality working conditions for all workers with special regard to the protection of migrant workers.

What we will do:

- Prepare a policy document to assist affiliates with the implementation and application of the Directive on Transparent and predictable working conditions (2019/1152).
- Review the application of and compliance with the posting rules and practices in the light of the COVID-19 crisis and propose additional remedial measures to allow the application of temporary cross-border posting within the framework of equal treatment and an adequate prevention, control and compliance.
- Organise a campaign to strengthen equal treatment for all workers, including equal pay and working conditions, social protection and security, health and safety, access to professional opportunities and equal workers' rights.
- Lobby the European Commission to enhance the European exchange of social security data and the introduction of a European social security number/card.
- Lobby for a swift and ambitious revision of Regulation 883/2004 by the European institutions.
- Introduce ECFIN 4.0 as a follow-up project to properly inform posted workers about their rights and further develop trade union networks as a tool to support posted workers to enforce these rights.
- Through the Standing Committee Building and the Executive Committee, update our policy documents with proposals to fight undeclared work and combat all forms of cross-border social security fraud and abuse. The Strategic Group will prepare a draft document.
- Participate in and influence the campaign of the European Commission against Undeclared Work.
- Lobby to make the European Labour Authority operational and get to work as quickly as possible.

Gender equality in our industries

Female workers represent around 10% of the total construction workforce and around 30% of the wood and furniture sector. The COVID-19 crisis has also shown a specific gender dimension. The expected increase of female workers in our industries demands a mental transformation and a transformation of the specific organisation of the work on construction sites and in companies taking into account and accommodating specific needs of female workers to improve working conditions for all and realise equal treatment.

What we demand:

- That the Commission presents the proposal for an EU Directive on pay transparency to close the gender pay gap as soon as possible. The COVID-19 crisis is no excuse to delay its adoption.
- Targeted initiatives to make our industries more attractive to female workers with specific attention to the specific gender dimension raised by the COVID-19 crisis.

What we will do:

- Together with the ETUC, the EFBWW Women's Network will send a letter to the European Commission concerning the Gender Pay Transparency Directive. The letter will include concerns related to the EFBWW sectors and the gender pension gap.
- The EFBWW Women's Network will assist the Standing Committees and the Executive Committee on how to further introduce the gender approach in the EFBWW work and how to include gender themes on the agendas of the European Social Dialogues in our industries, as well as in the themes treated by the EWCs and the European and International trade union networks.