



Workshop for introduction of the potential social pillar in EUSAIR

In October 2021, under the Presidency of Albania, the participating countries of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) agreed to commence the process of reviewing and updating of the EUSAIR Action Plan (AP). It was universally accepted among participating countries that some level of revision is necessary to adjust the AP to new circumstances, both at the level of macro-region and EU as a whole.

During the lifetime of EUSAIR, since 2012-2014 when the Strategy was conceived and launched, both the needs of the macro-region and policies of the EU have evolved to some extent. Some EUSAIR participating countries took the view that not only revision of the AP is justified, but Strategy itself. The same logic applied: with evolving needs on the ground and shifting policy focus, the Strategy document needs appraisal, and amendment as necessary.

Croatia initiated discussion on the introduction of potential social pillar in EUSAIR in line with fourth policy objective of the EU Cohesion policy: “a more social and inclusive Europe” during the EUSAIR Governing Board held in Sarajevo in October 2022. Discussion among National Coordinators was held, which resulted in decision to involve EUSAIR country experts relevant for the Social Pillar theme.

Topics related to employment and social and educational policies and rights became more prominent at the EU level with the adoption of the Pillar of Social Rights in 2017. Its importance was further accentuated in 2021, when the Action Plan for implementation of the Pillar was adopted. The EU member states defined national targets for employment, lifelong learning, social protection and poverty reduction by 2030.

Tripartite Porto Declaration adopted at the Social Summit in May 2021 strengthened the EU’s commitment to implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and set action for inclusive and sustainable growth and recovery that leaves no one behind.

Considering the importance of preserving and promoting the European social model, as well as the aspirations of non-EU members to join the EU, macro-regional cooperation through the Social Pillar could be an additional tool for strengthening European and national policies in relevant fields. Cooperation could include exchange of experiences, coordination of policy measures, definition of priorities and standardisation of approaches to solving social challenges that transcend national borders.

In cooperation with the EUSAIR Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia, which acts also as a European Social Fund Managing Authority will moderate and lead workshop with the aim of screening opportunities for the introduction of the Social Pillar.

The participation of policy experts, representatives of line ministries, from the fields of employment, education and social policy is expected. Their involvement and active participation during the workshop will help to shape the new Pillar, making it relevant by precisely addressing the needs of EUSAIR participating states.

Due to the efficiency of the workshop, the number of participants is limited to two experts per policy area from each participating state of the region (total 6 from each state).

The conclusions of the workshop will be processed by ESF MA Croatia, and a follow-up workshop will be organised in Q1 2023.

DRAFT AGENDA

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

9-10 November 2022

Venue: *Unitic, Fra Anđela Zvizdovića 1, Sarajevo*

Wednesday, 09/11/2022

- 12:30 – 13:00 Arrival and registration
- 13:00 – 14:00 Opening session (plenary)
- *Presentation: objective of workshop (ESF MA Croatia)*
- 14:00 – 14:30 Break
- 14:30 – 16:30 Parallel workshop sessions (*moderators ESF MA Croatia*)
- *Group 1: Employment policy*
 - *Group 2: Education policy*
 - *Group 3: Social policy*
- 16:30 – 17:00 Wrap-up session Day 1 (plenary)

Thursday, 10/11/2022

- 09:00 – 10:00 Parallel workshop sessions
- *Drafting conclusions for each group*
- 10:00 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 11:30 Conclusions and discussion (plenary)
- 11:30 – 11:45 Wrap-up Day 2 and future steps
- 11:45 – 12:00 Discussion and departure