

IMAGINE A FAIR EU

That's what we're working for.





“ We believe in a **fair European Union. Fair for the citizens, fair for the companies, fair for the climate and – of course – fair for the workers.**



A fair Europe

Every single day, 240 million workers contribute significantly to the EU. To growth and employment. To the green and the digital transition. To progress and prosperity. To an economy that works for people.

In the past decade, the EU has taken many positive steps towards a fairer EU with initiatives such as better enforcement in posting of workers, a fairer road transport sector, protection of workers from asbestos, reduction of the risks of cancer at work, improvement of platform workers' rights, enhanced written statement rules, increased pay transparency, the creation of the European Labour Authority and the Social Climate Fund.

However, the EU still has some way to go on the road towards a truly fair internal market, an inclusive green and digital transition and in respecting the division of competencies between the EU and the Member States.

On this backdrop, 3F calls for the European Parliament and European Commission 2024-2029 to actively work for:

- A **fair** EU
- A **respectful** EU
- A **sustainable** EU

We look forward to a constructive dialogue on the road towards a fairer Europe.

Best greetings

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A fair EU

What is the challenge?

Companies, workers and citizens in the EU all benefit from the free movement. Every year, millions of workers move to another EU Member States to find work for a shorter or longer period of time. Unfortunately, some employers do not comply with current legislation and collective agreements and too many mobile workers are taken advantage of.

EU-level studies show that mobile workers regularly experience unfair conditions regarding wages, contractual obligations and working conditions. A race to the bottom occurs with illegitimate companies, bogus self-employment and systematic underpayment or withholding of wages, enabled by a lack of insight into local wages, collective agreements, social security, taxes and pensions. The situation entails a lack of transparency for the individual worker and the authorities controlling workers' conditions.

Social dumping challenges are often seen related to postings and larger public procurement contracts, in which there is excessive use of only price and technical aspects as the awarding criteria. This despite the directive allows for public contracts to include qualitative criteria requiring decent working conditions and social and environmental considerations. The recruitment of workers mainly takes place through temporary work agencies, letterbox companies and other non-standard forms of employment. This entails serious challenges in terms of decent wages and working conditions, unsafe working environment, lack of apprenticeships, critical housing conditions and several other problematic employment aspects.

Part of the challenge with the EU's mobile workforce is related to enforcing the existing national and European rules. In other words, there is a prevalent lack of proper enforcement tools to ensure that European and national labour laws are fundamentally respected and that workers have equal pay for equal work in the workplace.

What is 3F's solution?

Fair and transparent conditions. A European labour card must be introduced as an effective tool in ensuring transparency and enforcing decent working conditions, fair mobility and transparency for workers and companies. The labour card must include real-time information about the worker's place of employment, working hours, training, as well as information about work- and residence permits for third-country nationals.

Fair public procurement. The Public Procurement Directive must be revised to effectively ensure and enforce the national and European labour market standards, as well as the occupational health and safety rules. It must include an improvement of the requirements for labour, occupational health and apprenticeship clauses in public procurement, as well as enhance the social aspects in connection with the pre-qualification of tenderers. The revision must also include a limitation on the length of subcontracting chains and ensure compliance with the principles of equal treatment within the Posting of Workers Directive. Furthermore, the social partners' ability to engage in dialogue with providers before, during and after the conclusion of contracts must be enabled.

Fair treatment of third-country national workers. Speculation in posting abuse of third-country nationals must be prevented by strengthening control with posting companies, including the temporary work agencies that specialise in posting these third-country nationals. In addition, the exploitation of third-country nationals in the EU must be tackled by preventing the bypassing of national and European rules, when work and services are performed in countries other than the country that issued the work and residence permit. Additionally, non-EU companies operating in the single market must be subjected to the same state aid rules as EU-based companies to prevent unrealistic tenders. Finally, the European Labour Authority's mandate to support Member States and the European Commission in ensuring that EU rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way, must be strengthened.





A respectful EU

What is 3F's solution?

Respect for the division of competencies and the national labour market models. All proposed EU legislation must respect the collective bargaining systems, the collective agreements, the right to collective action and the treaty-established division of competencies between the EU and the Member States. Furthermore, 3F calls on the European Commission to systematically include social dialogue aspects in its impact assessments of a new EU law. Finally, there is a need for stronger representation of European and national social partners in EU agencies, public authorities, committees and institutions.

Respect for the non-standard workers. 3F calls for the EU to support genuine “equal pay for equal work in the workplace” for the vulnerable group of labour platform-, fixed time-, part-time-, temporary- and agency workers, as well as the self-employed, whilst respecting the diverse labour market models. The EU must introduce a broad definition of “worker” and propose ambitious initiatives to regulate the sectors affected by artificial intelligence and online labour platforms.

Respect for the temporary workers. 3F calls for the Temporary Agency Work Directive to be revised to ensure fair and equal treatment of temporary agency workers. Additionally, the Directive must limit the unreasonable retention of temporary workers in open-ended contracts, prevent circumvention via enterprises and subcontracting and ensure increased transparency and the right to information.

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A sustainable EU

What is the challenge?

There is an undeniable need for a sustainable and ambitious green transition in the EU. It is vital for European workers, companies and future generations. In this context, it is essential that the green transition contributes to the development of jobs, workers and local communities in the EU. Development and just transition must go hand in hand to ensure a sustainable future for all.

Nobody should suffer from job-related diseases or accidents. Today, far too many people are exposed to unreasonable physical and psychological risks at work. Up to 60% of all work-related illnesses are caused by excessive overload of the body and, at the same time, it is the leading cause of exclusion from the labour market. Preventing these work-related risks is attainable, if workers' health and companies' profits are equally prioritised. Therefore, competition based on poor health and safety must simply be made impossible.

Sustainable solutions are also central when it comes to the cross-border exploitation of taxation systems. Whilst an increasing amount of Europeans are undertaking more underpaid part-time and full-time jobs to make ends meet, countless tax scandals have exposed loopholes and inadequate enforcement concerning speculations in tax evasion: either through creative tax havens and avoidances, money laundering or tax speculations as part of social dumping. Ultimately, the common denominator is that there is less money for our common growth and welfare.

What is 3F's solution?

A sustainable green transition. 3F calls for legally binding and solid climate targets followed by ambitious initiatives, to enable a sustainable green transition in the EU. In this respect, the active involvement of social partners and workers is key at local, national and international levels. An essential element is the investment in skills of the European labour force with a focus on further upskilling and reskilling. This applies to new and emerging sectors and to the sectors at risk of being phased out.

A sustainable working environment without physical and psychological degeneration. 3F suggests the introduction of a directive that covers all occupations causing ergonomically strain and physical degeneration. This directive must cover all physical procedures that can cause muscle and joint injuries, for instance, heavy lifting or poor working posture. The directive should also ensure that work must be organised and carried out safely.

Sustainable taxation rules. 3F calls for efficient EU sanctions against tax havens, money laundering and a strengthened EU tax haven blacklist. In addition, 3F calls for systematic control of tax and VAT speculation concerning creative company structures such as letterbox companies, solo self-employed, temporary work agencies, movement of capital within groups and the introduction of a financial transactions tax.





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