
MEPS APPROVE THE CREATION OF THE EUROPEAN LABOUR AUTHORITY

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On Tuesday (16 April), MEPs approved the creation of a European Labour Authority, as well as several positions that favour the rights of European workers and combat social dumping. But major changes still need to be made. EURACTIV France reports.

Combating social dumping requires real coordination at EU level, said socialist MEP Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy. This body will help make Europe's labour market fairer by combating fraud and abuse and by enabling citizen mobility, she added.

17 million citizens work or live in a member state other than their country of origin. But fraud and unfair competition have created a negative image of worker mobility, often perceived as a threat to local employment.

The European Labour Authority, which should be set up in 2019 with more than 100 staff, should make it possible to respond – at least in part – to this problem. It would support the fight against fraud, in particular by promoting coordination between the EU member states' various labour inspection systems.

In the EU Court of Auditors annual report, the question of the status of workers posted abroad is not presented as problematic in itself. But abuses are difficult for control services to grasp because concerned foreign companies refuse to cooperate and assistance from countries of origin is also difficult to obtain.

These are all obstacles that the European Labour Authority should be capable of removing. The new body should also be able to facilitate labour inspections that involve staff from another EU member states and could cover administrative and translation services.

Commission wants EU Labour Authority to open by 2019

The European Commission wants to set up a new EU agency to oversee cross-border labour disputes and manage the growing number of people who travel within the bloc for work. The agency would receive a budget of €100 million and open before the current Commission's term ends next year.

Another position adopted by MEPs concerns minimum rights of those with precarious jobs laid out in one of the EU Commission's proposals for a directive. The position calls for the implementation

of a series of minimum rights for occasional workers, trainees and those working for companies such as Uber or Deliveroo, which are often not covered by employment legislation.

The position adopted by MEPs proposes that workers have precise information on their contracts, including timetables to have some kind of predictability in their schedules. This should facilitate the combination of several jobs or activities, or studies for salaried students.

However, these suggestions do not cover self-employed workers, who represent a growing proportion of precarious workers, particularly those working for companies like Uber.

This directive will be the first giant step towards implementing an EU social pillar that will affect all EU workers [*] and employers will not be able to abuse labour market flexibility, said Spanish rapporteur Enrique Calvet Chambon of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) group.

A coordination in development

Ultimately, the thorny issue of coordinating social security systems will not have been resolved at EU level because of EU member states cannot agree on the issue. It will put political pressure on the Council of the EU to ensure that this matter is resolved after the elections, said a Parliament source.

This position, if transposed into national laws, would allow EU citizens wishing to find a job in another member state to receive unemployment benefits for six months. This provision caused a rift between EU member states because it would allow frontier workers to claim unemployment rights in the country where they work rather than in the country where they reside.

Luxembourg, for instance, which hosts a large number of cross-border workers from France, opposed the text, explained French MEP Anne Sanders from the European Peoples Party (EPP) group.

Kaynak/Source: