



Position paper on a European Job Guarantee

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Introduction

As of September 2023, approximately 13 million people were unemployed across the European Union. This includes 2.7 million young people.¹ The latest data on long-term unemployment from 2021 shows that 39% of unemployed people have been without a job for more than 12 months, rising to 50% for people aged between 50-64.²

Over the past three years, the people of Europe have faced a pandemic, the return of war to the continent, and a cost-of-living crisis. The pandemic highlighted how we are failing to value essential jobs and services, or to provide economic security for all. We saw how quickly externalities can threaten jobs and push people into unemployment without interventions such as the SURE programme. As the need for a just transition grows so does the need to protect the livelihoods of those who could be affected by the transition and other external shocks. A European Job Guarantee could support access to quality jobs and employment for workers across the European provided that it is tailored to the aspirations and competences of unemployed persons, and that the jobs provided are quality, well-paid jobs that guarantee a dignified life and work-life balance.

What is a European Job Guarantee

European Job Guarantee is a policy proposal for a demand-driven job creation programme funded by the EU, national governments and local authorities and implemented at national, regional and local level. The proposal for a European Job Guarantee scheme is rooted in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises that “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment”,³ and in Articles 15 and 31 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.⁴

The main goal of a Job Guarantee programme is to reduce involuntary, long-term unemployment by creating a safety net of publicly funded employment. These jobs would be provided in civil society organisations and social economy enterprises and to meet the social and environmental needs that local communities face. They would be. They would be supported by the European Social Fund+ and other cohesion funds.

Concrete examples of Job Guarantee projects already exist in several Member States. For example, in France the *Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée* project⁵ was developed in 2017 by All Together in Dignity (ATD) Fourth World and other civil society organisations and co-financed by the European Union. The project helped almost one thousand people in less than two years in accessing stable and decent jobs. The *Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée* project has been successful so far by centring the experiences of long-term unemployed persons

1 Eurostat, 124/2023 – 3 November 2023

2 Eurostat 2021

3 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)* [eng.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](#).

4 *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000)*

5 ATD World Forum (2019) www.atd-fourthworld.org/zero-long-term-unemployment-zones-experiment-in-france-work-as-a-common-good/



and tailoring the project to their specific needs. The project takes a bottom-up approach, adapting jobs to people's capacities and creating quality and sustainable employment in the general interest. The role of local authorities is crucial in implementing this personalised approach and it is vital to ensure that they receive adequate funding to implement these programmes. Similar schemes have since been rolled-out at national, regional or local level in the EU such as in Brussels, Wallonia, Groningen, Marienthal, Berlin, Rome, and throughout different regions in Greece.

Social Platform Position on a European Job Guarantee

A European Job Guarantee can be a positive intervention if implemented with the appropriate considerations and safeguards. It could serve as a way of pursuing many of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan⁶ and thus contribute to the EU 2030 targets. In line with the European Care Strategy, a European Job Guarantee could also help create higher quality and more efficient, human rights-based, care and healthcare services. It could address the labour shortages in the sector, by providing jobs with good working conditions, living wages, and appropriate training. Equally, it would contribute to the implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan (2021). A Job Guarantee not only improves individual wellbeing but can also improve community wellbeing and inclusion through the creation of socially and environmentally impactful work that is not necessarily profitable.

Social Platform is supportive of a European Job Guarantee that ensures the following elements:

Sustainable Employment and Quality Jobs

The aim of a Job Guarantee should be first and foremost to provide sustainable employment, promote quality jobs and prevent in-work poverty, rather than boost productivity. These jobs should be in civil society or social economy enterprises but should not be used to subsidize the for-profit private sector. The salaries offered through the Job Guarantee should be at a higher rate than the minimum wage to ensure a positive hierarchy. This could also help facilitate the creation of a higher wage floor. There is also a need for a holistic approach which assesses other needs that people may have to maintain their employment and considers accompanying support for housing, care, and health. Furthermore, a robust anti-discrimination control should be implemented to ensure that people are not excluded based on sex, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, socio-economic background, or additional grounds.

⁶ [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)



A European Job Guarantee should also provide jobs with a sustainable contract, strong employment rights, and social security provision. Additionally, it should ensure the implementation of the right to employee training and workplace learning, in addition to the universal right to adult learning and the right to paid training leave, enabling everyone to access structured, relevant and high-quality training opportunities, fostering upskilling and reskilling. Moreover, it must take account of the specific training needs of long-term unemployed people, who may face particularly difficult living conditions, generating for example a short-term relationship with time which affects integration through work. It must therefore be designed to be integrated and complementary to all actions carried out by existing players involved in the social and professional integration of long-term unemployed people.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the Job Guarantee programme must be voluntary, and unemployed people should not have existing benefits reduced or withdrawn or any other sanctions applied if they decide not to participate. Refusal of job offers must not jeopardise the ability to be included in the programme or to receive other economic or social support. In addition, people who can only work part-time should have their incomes supplemented by social assistance payments, to ensure that they do not experience a fall in income by taking up employment through the job guarantee scheme. It is important that people receiving a living allowance based on a disability or other factors are still considered eligible for the scheme if they want to partake. Support should be offered to ensure that such allowances, services, and other support mechanisms afforded to persons with disabilities and other groups are not taken away when people enrol in the programme.

Personalised approach

It is of utmost importance to ensure a quality job position that fits individual needs. It is necessary to implement tailor-made, personalised pathway approaches rooted in individual circumstances, which must include a bilateral relationship between the unemployed person and the public entity or social service provider. Social economy enterprises can play a valuable role here given their expertise and experience in supporting work integration.

The individual life situation including ethnic background, health status, disability, age, caring responsibilities, and skills of the participants must be considered when offering a job. This must include the recognition of existing qualifications (including those of EU mobile migrants and those gained in third countries) and of skills, including soft and transversal skills. In this regard and among others, micro-credentials are key elements in contributing to upskilling and reskilling strategies. Even though some disadvantaged people can get access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities, often micro-credentials are not recognised by employers or public authorities, which makes it more difficult to allow proper employability to low-skilled workers.



Public Employment Services and other services implementing the European Job Guarantee must be endowed with sufficient staff and resources to handle cases personally and dedicatedly. The staff should be diverse and include representatives of key target groups to build trust and bridge cultural gaps with beneficiaries. Moreover, the staff should regularly receive anti-bias and diversity training and work closely with mediators from local communities to best reach beneficiaries. These services also need to be part of holistic approaches going beyond employment and liaise and refer to other social and support services.

Inclusion of civil society, and social economy actors

While a European Job Guarantee programme will be publicly funded and will provide jobs in the public sector, a specific amount of funding should be reserved to also support employment among civil society, non-profit social service providers, and social economy and work integration social enterprises (WISEs). These types of organisations are crucial to facilitate access to quality employment for long-term unemployed persons and persons in situations of vulnerability in crucial sectors such as the care sector. They guarantee a just and fair transition that leaves no one behind. Furthermore, they can play a crucial role in reaching out to people in difficult life situations and creating person-centred paths for those who find the labour market farthest from them. Nevertheless, the European Job Guarantee should come from additional sources and not lead to a reduction of sources for job creation or support to social economy. Social economy actors should be involved in the design and the implementation of the processes at the national, regional and local level.

Supports a Just Transition

A properly implemented European Job Guarantee could contribute to ensuring a fair and just Green Deal for both people and planet. It is an opportunity for a policy instrument tackling not only economic instability, in-work poverty and social and labour market exclusion, but also the issue of climate change and the green and digital transitions. It has the potential to promote an inclusive circular economy, nature conservation, renewable energy, and environmental protection through the creation of community-based green jobs. These jobs can offer vulnerable communities, including those exposed to the negative effects of the green transition, employment and lifelong learning opportunities, and develop more sustainable places and ways of living.



Conclusion

Due to the very specific challenges certain social groups face, the existence of a European Jobs Guarantee should not rule out other, more targeted actions where extra support is needed, both for jobseekers and employers. Therefore, just as was the case with the Youth Guarantee, the EU should remain open to more focused programmes of this nature addressing groups such as jobseekers with disabilities.

Measures to tackle unemployment alone are not enough to ensure decent living conditions for all. In-work poverty, widely spread in the European Union, demonstrates that having a job does not always prevent poverty. To be complete and effective, a European Job Guarantee must ensure that the jobs provided are quality, well-paid jobs that guarantee a dignified life and work-life balance. These jobs should ensure a positive hierarchy by offering remuneration higher than the minimum wage.

Finally, the Job Guarantee needs to be complementary to social service provision and the European Union needs to push for high-quality, life-long social services. These need to take an active inclusion approach that truly enables the labour market inclusion of those who can work, and the social participation of those who cannot. There is a need for a holistic approach rooted in active inclusion, which assesses other needs that people may have to enter and maintain their employment and considers accompanying support for quality social services including housing, care, health, education, as well as access to adequate income support.



Social Platform is the largest, leading organisation working on social issues. We have strength in numbers and put power back into people's hands who want a more Social Europe. Collectively we unite and give a voice to tens of thousands of organisations and hundreds of millions of people in Europe in all their diversity.



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