

## Policy Department Services

Policy departments are research units that support parliamentary bodies (the President, committees, and the Secretary General) in performing their legislative and institutional tasks. They provide in-house and external expertise to support the committees and other parliamentary bodies in shaping legislation and exercising democratic scrutiny.

For an overview of all the available research services the European Parliament has to offer, please visit: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/sources.html>

What makes policy departments unique?

- They are dedicated to serving committees and respond to their requests for expertise.
- They operate on the basis of political priorities set by committees.
- As well as support from in-house specialists, they also offer access to paid external experts.

### POLICY DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND QUALITY OF LIFE POLICIES

Policy Department A provides high-quality expertise, up-to-date analysis and independent research to the **committees it supports: ECON, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE and IMCO.**

Policy department A serves its committees by:

1. **Connecting committees** with an extensive network of expertise in academia, specialist consultancy firms, and think tanks, other EU institutions and international organisations;
2. **Providing** expert policy advice and carefully targeted research at any point in the legislative cycle that is independent, of high quality and mindful of political sensitivities; supporting the scrutiny role of committees;
3. **Repurposing committee research** to support informed engagement between EU citizens and Members; ensuring that parliamentary work is carried out objectively and by experts;
4. **Managing** committee expertise budgets, implementing projects, using external expertise to meet requirements set by the Committee coordinators.

**In-house** policy analysts and researchers provide ad-hoc information and policy analysis, either in response to a specific request or on their own initiative and following personal consultation with Members. They also support the work of the President and the Secretary-General with briefings and background information.

**External** paid expertise is provided exclusively at the request of the committee, following a decision by the Committee coordinators. A budget appropriation is allocated each year to committees for this purpose. When working with external experts, the policy department ensures that the research meets the highest standards of independence and quality, and addresses the committee's specific needs. To this end, external experts are selected through procurement procedures based on objective selection and award criteria. The policy department then closely oversees their work to ensure that it is fully in keeping with the research request.



The most common research products delivered by Policy Department A are:

- **“At a glance”**: a 2-page research paper providing a concise summary of a particular policy, legislative proposal or event, including essential information with text and graphics, plus links and suggestions for further reading.
- **Briefing**: a concise research paper providing background information to closely-defined topics, which can feed for example into the drafting of a committee report.
- **In-depth analysis**: a medium length research paper generally directly linked to an upcoming legislative proposal or an own-initiative report.
- **Study**: a longer-term research paper usually offering comparative examinations of the laws or policies of Member States or third countries in areas where no such analysis is available. They may form the basis for later parliamentary work or for more focused research.
- **Workshop**: a dedicated session with a group of experts to address a specific issue raised by the committee. A workshop brings in contracted independent experts from external organisations, such as universities, and it is not necessarily open to the public.

## HOW IS EXPERTISE REQUESTED FROM POLICY DEPARTMENT A?



## FOCUS ON THE EMPL COMMITTEE

Within Policy Department A, a [specific team](#) provides expertise and advice **to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)** in all areas of the committee’s remit.

The EMPL Committee is mainly responsible for employment policies and all aspects of social policy, working conditions, vocational training and the free movement of workers and pensioners. The powers and responsibilities of the EMPL Committee are listed in [Annex V of the EP’s Rules of Procedure](#).

## A SELECTION OF RECENT RESEARCH PAPERS REQUESTED BY THE EMPL COMMITTEE

### Working conditions - Precarious employment: Patterns, trends and policy strategies



This study provides evidence that non-standard forms of employment (around 40 % share of employment) have a higher risk of precariousness (in-work poverty, job security, social security, labour rights, stress and health levels, training). Particularly affected are young people and the following sectors and occupations: personal services, hospitality and elementary professions. Recommendations for policy reforms: re-designing national welfare systems in order to avoid poverty traps; better implementation and enforcement of existing EU directives in some Member States; monitoring derogations from equal treatment in the temporary agency work directive and practices of opting out from the working time directive.



### Working conditions - Social protection of workers in the platform economy



The rise of the “platform” economy has highlighted the question of inadequate social protection for workers in this sector. The study finds that up to 70 per cent cannot access basic schemes like maternity and housing benefits. Policy recommendations include: legal reform to ensure social protection for all non-standard workers, reversing the burden of proof in determining employee status and adapting competition rules to permit collective bargaining by (solo) self-employed workers



### Free movement - The European Labour Authority (ELA)



The workshop supported the EMPL Committee in preparing its report for the negotiations on the regulation for this new European agency. Key points from discussion: 1) Cross-border inspections: While some saw the need to introduce a stronger legal mandate, others stressed that it is key to build trust through voluntary cooperation of Member States. 2) Social security coordination: From a social security perspective, concerns were expressed to disrupt existing structures and cooperation mechanisms by integrating a part into the ELA. 3) Supporting labour mobility (EURES): Shifting the management from the Commission to ELA could help to better integrate various aspects of labour mobility, though at the price of more complex coordination.



### Social Inclusion - Minimum Income Schemes in EU Member States



Updating earlier studies on the subject from 2007 and 2011, this edition found a degree of convergence in basic concepts, away from mere economic support and towards active inclusion measures, while considerable differences in implementation remain. Recommendations include enhancing adequacy by rationalising social expenditure, and improving the schemes’ accessibility to increase take-up by all in need. At EU level, funding through ESF and FEAD could be considered, and the European Semester used to monitor progress.



## Health and Safety at Work - The Use of Chip Implants for Workers



Originally developed with a view to medical applications, RFID chip implants for humans have been adapted by a small number of companies for purposes of identification and access control. While such schemes have been rolled out on a voluntary basis so far, they raise questions of health and safety (carcinogenicity, pharmaceutical impact), as well as more fundamental ones, ranging from data protection and workers' rights to workplace ethics and human rights implications.



## European Social Fund - Lessons from ESF for ESF +



At the workshop, experts underlined the following lessons for the ESF+ regulation, currently under negotiation: 1) Absorption: Investing in administrative capacity; empowering local level actors. 2) Beneficiaries' experience: Continue effective reforms such as stronger commitment to inclusive growth, simpler structures; increase capacity building; stronger involvement of (new) ESF stakeholders. 3) Fighting child poverty: A particular focus on child poverty in national strategic policy frameworks for social inclusion and poverty reduction as enabling condition for ESF funding; in regions with high child poverty - a specific strategic objective and share of ESF+ (and possibly ERFD) resources to be targeted at poor children.



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All our research papers are available on our website:  
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/empl/supporting-analyses.html>

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