

## ***FinUnions' opinion: Fair mobility in the EU requires stronger rules and better protection of workers' rights***

In its 2026 work programme, the European Commission has announced a forthcoming Fair Mobility Package aimed at improving the conditions for worker mobility in Europe and addressing existing challenges.

According to FinUnions, it is essential that the internal market is deepened and developed based on fair rules. A key priority is to ensure fair mobility for workers through commonly enforced standards.

The free movement of workers has been a vital principle of the EU since its establishment. It is a fundamental right, including equal treatment in employment, pay, and other working conditions. Terms and conditions of employment are determined by the collective agreements and legislation of the country where the work is carried out.

Workers must also have access to social security, unemployment benefits, healthcare, education, and pensions. EU coordination rules determine whether a worker falls under the social security system of the country of employment or their country of origin.

The Commission's upcoming initiative is important for employees, as it aims to ensure that workers coming to Finland are employed under conditions that comply with collective agreements and labour law. In practice, this is not always currently the case.

Due to demographic changes, the EU needs labour migration to meet labour market demands as the workforce evolves and the population ages. Migration must take place under ethical conditions, and all forms of labour exploitation must be prevented.

The Commission's proposal is expected to consist of at least three main elements:

- **A European Social Security Pass**, as part of efforts to digitalise social security processes. The aim is to facilitate proof of social security coverage.
- **Strengthening the European Labour Authority (ELA).**
- An initiative to promote **skills portability**.

### ***The role and mandate of the European Labour Authority (ELA)***

The European Labour Authority (ELA) supports Member States by coordinating and organising joint labour inspections, providing training for labour inspectors, and facilitating mediation between Member States in cases related to labour mobility and social security. It also carries out information and awareness-raising activities.

Under its current mandate, ELA does not have independent powers to monitor legislation concerning posted workers or social security. Enforcement of these rules remains the responsibility of individual Member States.

The Commission proposes expanding ELA's mandate to allow it to access information on posted workers, enabling it to assess risks and monitor compliance with rules on working conditions and social security. Special attention would be given to improving oversight of posted workers from outside the EU and EEA, who are currently outside the authority's mandate. The aim is to strengthen ELA's capacity to support Member States in cross-border enforcement.

It is crucial that the EU actively prevents and combats social dumping and labour exploitation, including violations of laws and collective agreements affecting mobile workers. To strengthen enforcement, comprehensive labour legislation should be developed to enable collective redress mechanisms, including class actions.

Special attention must also be paid to third-country nationals, who are in a particularly vulnerable position in the context of labour mobility.

## Skills Portability Initiative

As part of the package, the Commission also aims to improve the recognition of skills and qualifications in both regulated and non-regulated professions. A particular focus is on recognising qualifications and skills acquired outside the EU. Harmonising recognition procedures is a key priority, as the lack of a consistent approach has been identified as a major barrier to labour mobility in Europe.

The initiative may include legislative proposals to increase transparency of qualifications and simplify recognition procedures, as well as measures to facilitate recognition processes in regulated professions.

FinUnions supports measures that facilitate fair mobility but emphasises that recognition of qualifications is not the primary barrier to mobility. The focus should be on improving wages, working conditions, and working environments, as well as preventing worker exploitation.

Rather than creating new tools, mobility could be improved by making better use of existing instruments for the recognition of skills and qualifications. Under no circumstances should efforts to enhance mobility lead to lowering sector-specific or profession-specific qualification and competence requirements.

### Additional information:

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