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Call for tenders SD Project 2026-28

Call for tenders for subcontracting expertise in the field of Social Dialogue

This is a call for a subcontractor to provide expertise in the framework of the implementation of the Social partners joint project 2026-2028 – Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU.

The EU social partners will publish the call on their websites on 29 May 2026. The **deadline for submission of bids is 18 June 2026 at midday (12:00).**

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1. Context of the expert study: the Social partners joint project 2026-2028 – Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU

1.1 Summary and objectives of the project

The main project activity is for the cross-sectoral Social Partners to continue their joint work on promoting and reinforcing the EU social dialogue as well as to support the implementation of the Council's Recommendation on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the European Union by gathering and looking at examples in the different European countries and systems and drafting recommendations.

To this end, the Social Partners propose to organise 3 workshops with their respective member organisations on the basis of regional criteria (9 countries selected per workshop, 27 EU Member States).

An external expert will be subcontracted. The expert's task will be to draft a report with relevant examples of measures to strengthen social dialogue, as well as to facilitate productive discussions during the workshops.

At the end of the project, ETUC, BusinessEurope, SMEUnited and SGI Europe will draft recommendations. Together with the collected examples, this will be the main deliverable of the project.

A final conference will be organised to disseminate the results. The conference will be organised in an in-person format and will target members of the EU-level Social Partners, the EU Commission, the Council/national ministries and other relevant institutional actors.

In this context, the main aim of the project is to strengthen social dialogue in the EU by tackling the following specific objectives:

- Support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU;
- The project is expected to contribute to improving and reinforcing bipartite social dialogue as well as to support capacity-building of Social Partners at different levels.

1.2 Context of the project

The European social partner organisations at cross-industry level, ETUC, BusinessEurope, SGI Europe, and SMEUnited, have resolved to continue their joint project activities and build upon the outcomes of the previous Integrated Projects. The Integrated Projects (IP) of the European Social Dialogue (EUSD) have provided the European Social Partners with an



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important tool to promote and reinforce the link between social dialogue at national and European level, as well as to address emerging issues which are of joint relevance.

Against this background, this project will give an opportunity to the EU Social Partners to look jointly into the implementation, at national level, of the Council Recommendation on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU , with a view to preparing the Social Partners on a bipartite level for the discussions on this with the EU Member States in the context of the EU-level monitoring activities.

The Employment Committee (EMCO)¹ is tasked with monitoring regularly, as part of its multilateral surveillance activities, the implementation of the Recommendation, and this joint project work will both take into account the work undertaken in EMCO, and can support the European Social Partners in their contribution to this EMCO work.

A first EMCO social dialogue review will take place in October 2026 with representatives from each Member State, including the social partners, and assess the actions that have been undertaken at national level in a number of the policy areas that are addressed in the Council Recommendation.

2. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

This call for tenders concerns the drafting of a report and support in the facilitation of workshops.

The expert will be asked to coordinate with the EU-level social partners and to support them to achieve the project's objectives through the following tasks:

- Supporting the EU-level social partners in drafting the agenda, preparing background material, and attending the **three workshops** in person. The expert will facilitate the relevant parts of the discussions during the workshops in order to exhaustively gather material for the report, including all available examples, with a sufficient amount of information. If necessary, the expert will contribute to the workshop agenda by delivering presentations.

The three workshops will take place in person over 1 day of activity each (if deemed suitable, activities may be divided over two half days) and will gather around 50 participants each. The working language will be English and interpretation will be available as needed. The agenda of the workshops will include joint presentations and exchanges of experience. Workshops will bring together countries by geographical area and with similar approaches, thus creating a dynamic environment for discussions and increasing participation. The three workshops will gather nine countries each and will be divided as follows:

¹ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/coordination-employment-and-social-policies/employment-committee_en



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- North-West: The provisional list of countries includes Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden. Host country: Sweden, Stockholm;
- East: The provisional list of countries includes Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia. – Host country: Poland;
- South: The provisional list of countries includes Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain – Host country: Italy.

This approach will enable the Social Partners to reach all 27 EU Member States.

- Supporting the EU-level social partners in drafting the agenda, preparing background material, and attending the **Steering Committee meetings** that will be organised in person and online according to needs.

- Drafting a **report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation**, that will serve as a basis for the European Social Partners to propose recommendations. The drafting will be done based on exchanges of information during the three workshops described above. The report will include a collection of examples and experiences from the Member States that will participate in the project's event. Recommendations for implementation will be prepared by the European social partners in view of the content gathered by the subcontractor. ETUC will be in charge of the subcontracting.

The report must be drafted in English and proofread. The report should be 60 to maximum 80 pages long. The use of visual facilitation, graphics and tables to better illustrate the content of the reports are strongly encouraged. They will represent tangible outputs of the exchanges and of the knowledge created during the project.

- Supporting the ETUC in drafting the agenda, preparing background material, participating in person, and presenting key project results on the occasion of the **final conference** of the project. The final conference will be held in Brussels and will gather around 100 participants, including representatives of the member organisations of the EU Social Partners, the European Commission, the Council and other possible interested stakeholders. The final conference will be devoted to the presentation of the overall project results. The working language will be English and interpretation will be available if needed.

3. Expertise, experience and skills required

The drafting of the report requires sound and proven expertise in the following fields:

- A wide expertise on EU and national-level social dialogue, including knowledge of relevant social dialogue-related documents and processes;
- Experience in working on European level projects;
- Experience in working with social partners at both European and national level.



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Skills required:

- Proven ability to carry out in-depth research on EU issues and understanding links between European and national level;
- Proven research skills, including identifying stakeholders and conducting interviews;
- Capacity to adapt and interact with social partners, making the most of the opportunities for exchange provided by the project;
- Capacity to lead and moderate workshops;
- High proficiency in English: ability to draft documents and make presentations in English;
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits;
- Availability to participate in project meetings.

To ensure a coherent policy approach, familiarity with the social partners documents available on this page is important.

4. Time schedule and reporting

The subcontractor will be asked to sign the contract in July 2026. They will have to be available for a first Steering Committee meeting with the European social partners in early Autumn 2026 and possibly to be present as an observer at the EMCO Social Dialogue review meeting scheduled on 7 – 8 October 2026 (subject to confirmation from the EMCO organisers). The provisional timeline for the three workshops is the first half of 2027, and the final conference will take place between the end of 2027 and early 2028. The exact dates of the workshops and for the submission of draft documents will be selected in agreement between the European Social partners and the subcontractor.



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5. Payment

The total maximum budget available for the fees of the subcontractor is as follows:

Contract with ETUC	
Main activities and Meetings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing methodology• Drafting the report• Actively participating in the workshops and final conference• Liaising with the EU-level social partners, the Steering Committee and national affiliates when necessary	
Total budget for the Expertise	50 400 € (VAT and all taxes included)

The subcontractor will be remunerated in various instalments (advance and final payment). This amount covers all fees but does not include the travel and subsistence costs for possible physical meetings.

The report will be duly and clearly accredited to the authors. Ownership of the results and of the written outputs (including the study produced by the sub-contractor) shall be vested in the EU-level social partners, which shall have the right of first publication. The subcontractor may use the results and the written outputs after their publication by the EU-level social partners, quoting them as contractors.

6. Selection criteria

Bids will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Quality of the technical proposal submitted by the bidder;
- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills (including CV) as required and described in part 3 of this call;
- Proven track record of ensuring the quality of written materials produced, both in terms of content and format (i.e. previous publications) and in the relevant subjects specified in this call for tenders;
- Financial proposal within the prescribed budget.

7. Form, structure and content of the tender

Tenders must be written in English. They must be signed by the tenderer or his duly authorised representative and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. Tenders must be clear and concise and assembled in a coherent fashion.

Since tenderers will be judged on the content of their written bids, they must make it clear that



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they are able to meet the requirements of the specifications.

All tenders must include at least two sections:

i) Technical proposal

The technical proposal must provide all the information needed for the purpose of awarding the contract, including:

- Specific information covering the technical and professional capacity, as required, in particular:
 - Description of relevant professional experience with emphasis on the specific fields covered by the invitation to tender;
 - Detailed curriculum vitae of key coordinator and of the other team members;
 - A selection of the main works and/or articles published by all the experts involved, in relation to the relevant subjects specified in this tender.
- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks listed in part 2.

ii) Financial proposal

Prices of the financial proposal must be quoted in euros, including if the sub-contractor is based in a country which is not in the euro-area. As far as the tenderers of those countries are concerned, they cannot change the amount of the bid because of the evolution of the exchange rate. The tenderers choose the exchange rate and assume all risks or opportunities relating to the rate fluctuation.

The maximum amount available for this contract is EUR 50,400 (VAT and all taxes included²).

Prices shall be fixed and not subject to revision during the performance of the contract.

8. Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money, taking into account the specific objectives, requirements and selection criteria of the tender. The principles of transparency and equal treatment will be respected with a view to avoiding any conflicts of interest.

9. Content and selection of the bids

This call for tenders will be published on the social partners' websites on 29 May 2026. Offers must be sent at the latest on 18 June 2026 at midday (12:00). Offers must be sent

² Unless the subcontractor is exempt from VAT, VAT is always included in the total, also in case it's ETUC who has to pay it in case of reverse charge.



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to ETUC, in electronic format (by e-mail to lmartin@etuc.org) and refer to the “Social partners joint project 2026-2028”.

A committee will be formed comprising of representatives of the EU-level social partners. The committee members will evaluate the tenders that have been deemed admissible and that comply with the above-mentioned stipulations of the tendering process. An evaluation grid and classification of participation requests will be drawn up, dated and signed by all the members of the evaluation committee and kept for future reference.

This report will include:

1. The name and address of the contracting authority, the purpose and value of the contract;
2. The names of any excluded candidates and the reasons for their rejection;
3. The names of candidates selected for consideration;
4. The names of candidates put forward and justification of their choice in terms of the selection or award criteria.