

## ESAP PHASE 2: Transitioning into formality and decent work in the Western Balkans

Informal employment and lack of social dialogue take centre stage among the key issues that need significant improvements to meet the EU accession criteria. Against this background, Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP 2) – a project implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and International Labour Organisation (ILO), enters its second phase (ESAP 2), consolidating the results achieved under its 1<sup>st</sup> phase and expanding to cover additional employment and social policy topics of high relevance for Western Balkans.

### ESAP 2 activities will focus on:

- **Undeclared Work**, by generating qualitative and quantitative evidence on what works and what does not regarding the transition to formality in the region and improving availability and quality of data on different dimensions of informality, the project will create a basis for improved policy-making, design and implementation to reduce informal employment and undeclared work.
- **Informal employment and undeclared work** will also be a focus of **Labour Inspections'** peer learning exercises, within their regional network, to increase regional knowledge and understanding of different labour inspection systems and practices, which would ultimately result in design and pilot-test tailored inspection guidelines for detecting undeclared work.
- **Strengthening** institutional **capacities** of Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, and Public Employment Services in **developing, monitoring and evaluating labour market policies and measures**.
- **Increasing exposure and engagement** of the Western Balkan officials from Ministries of Labour and Public Employment Services to EU-wide networks and processes, and supporting peer learning, in the process of **alignment with the EU acquis** and **implementation of the European Social Pillar**.
- Working to increase effectiveness of **tripartite and bipartite social dialogue** through: Establishment of online performance-monitoring tools for Economic and Social Councils in their policy dialogue; development of regional guidelines for promotion of collective bargaining in selected economic sectors; and promotion of labour dispute resolution and industrial relations.

The ESAP 2 partners and beneficiaries: Ministries of Labour; Public Employment Services; Economic and Social Councils; Agencies for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes; Labour Inspectorates; Statistical Offices; and Social Partners will be actively involved in the implementation of the project, taking ownership and ensuring sustainability of the achieved results.



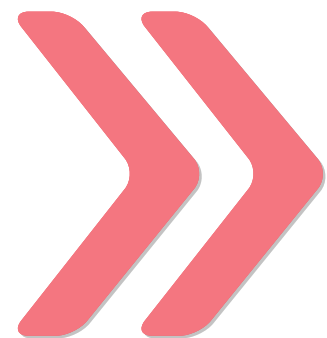
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**WORKING WITH DIGNITY**  
**in the Western Balkans**  
ESAP 2 - EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS PLATFORM

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## WESTERN BALKAN (UN)EMPLOYMENT in numbers

EMPLOYMENT  
is one of the TOP PRIORITIES in the Western Balkans!



**Around 60%** of Western Balkan citizens  
continuously single out **UNEMPLOYMENT**  
as their dominant concern in Balkan Barometer annual surveys.



In 2018, **employment rate** in the Western  
Balkans was **57%**. This marks an increase of almost 10%  
compared to 2012.

However, only half of working-age people in the Western Balkans  
have jobs. And although **unemployment** is  
high (around **17%**), **inactivity** is even  
**higher (38%)**.



**1.35 million unemployed** people **were**  
**registered with Public**  
**Employment Services throughout**  
**the region** in 2018, **53%** of them **WOMEN**.



**YOUTH unemployment** is another weak spot – at  
**35%** it is more than double the  
EU average of 15.2%.

Out of **over 700.000 new jobs** created in the last 8  
years, 48% of them were taken by women **and less than**  
**5% by young people** under 24 years of age.



**Informal employment** is one of **the**  
**major barriers** to economic prosperity of the region – **its**  
**share ranges from 20% to 30%.**



Among the working age population (15-64 years old) in the Western Balkans, **young**  
**people** (15-24) are **most likely to be informally**  
**employed**, with informality rate ranging **from 30% to**  
**almost 40%**, closely **followed by the workers**  
**between 55 and 64** years of age.