

Our demands

- In addition to information on labour and social law in the host country, mobile and migrant workers need access to individual advice and support in enforcing their rights
- Comprehensive advisory structures are needed all over Europe
- Effective advisory structures to support mobile and migrant workers are
 - closely connected to trade union structures
 - transnationally connected
 - established on a permanent basis (no temporary projects!)
- The promotion of a fair European labour market is a public task. Trade union-related advisory structures to support mobile and migrant workers must therefore be permanently financed at European level through a separate budget line.

Further information and contacts

■ Study



“Supporting mobile migrant labour – the role of the trade union movement”



■ kurzlinks.de/supporting_mobile_migrant_labour

■ **The European Support Network for Fair Mobility is committed to permanent EU funding for trade union-related support and advisory structures for mobile and migrant workers. This initiative is supported by the European trade union family.**

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■ **European Support Network for Fair Mobility**
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Fair without borders

Protection against labour exploitation needs trade union-related advisory structures – all over Europe

Fair wages and decent working conditions for mobile and migrant workers should be a matter of fact in the European Union. **However, there is a wide gap between aspiration and reality.**

Whether in agriculture, construction or international road transport, more and more people are working in another European country for longer or shorter periods of time. These workers are often deprived of their wages and forced to work under miserable working conditions. They often do not speak the language of the host country and know far too little about their rights.

“We have had good experiences with ‘Fair Mobility’ in Germany in the fight against labour exploitation. We need such advisory structures all over Europe!” *Anja Piel (DGB)*

To improve the situation, clear rules and better control measures are needed, as well as more support for mobile and migrant workers. Trade unions are taking up this responsibility, but they alone cannot close the protection gaps without public funding. Examples such as “Fair Mobility” in Germany have shown: A network of advisory and support structures for mobile migrant workers, in close cooperation with trade unions, can play an important role here.

In order to establish such a network of trade union-related advisory centers throughout Europe, the EU must assume its responsibility and provide long-term funding.

An insight into the practice

Enforcing workers’ rights in transnational labour relations is a difficult undertaking:

A Serbian truck driver who had worked for a Slovenian transport company for two years turned to the “Fair European Labour Mobility (FELM)” project of the Slovenian trade union federation ZSSS. The reason: he had not been paid his last monthly salary after being dismissed. By analyzing the tachograph and other documents, the responsible union secretary determined that the colleague had mainly been working in Germany. He was therefore entitled to the German statutory minimum wage.

As a result, not just one month’s salary was missing, but a sum of around 20,000 euros. However, the former employer refused to provide an additional payment. As the driver had been sent to Germany to work for a transport company there, the net part of the missing sum could be claimed from the German transport company under the general contractor liability provisions of the Posted Workers Act. But that sounds easier than it was: first, the employment contract and other documents had to be understood and legally classified in Slovenian. The advisory center of the Slovenian trade union had to establish contact with the social security institutions and the labour inspectorate and prepare a lawsuit before a Slovenian court.

“In order to effectively protect mobile and migrant workers, trade union related advisory structures must be just as transnational as business models of the employer side.”

Isabelle Schömann (ETUC)

“Trade Union counselling services are particularly needed to protect the most vulnerable workers, such as seasonal workers.”

Kristjan Bragason (EFFAT)

On the German side, information about the German transport company had to be compiled, the driver’s claims documented and asserted against the transport company. As the driver only speaks Serbian, a number of documents had to be translated several times.

The outcome of the case is still open. It is an example of the urgent need to strengthen cross-border professional advisory structures for mobile and migrant workers in view of transnational business models and labour relations.



The “Fair European Labour Mobility 2” project shows how support for mobile and migrant workers can work. Trade unions from eight EU countries operate a network of contact points for mobile and migrant workers. The experiences are encouraging. Such approaches need to be expanded and financed on a permanent basis.

www.fair-labour-mobility.eu/