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# Newsletter

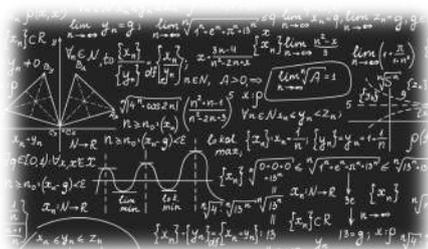
*Special number within the COVID-19 context*

## First of all: WHY Publisind?

The PUBLISIND Federation is a trade union organization created “by employees for employees” with a well-defined role in the social dialogue mechanism in Romania. With a history of more than 10 years, since 2007, the PUBLISIND Federation has been the only trade union organization that brings together more than 70 trade unions from more than 10 branches, especially from the public service area. With members from justice, police, prisons, central administration, social protection, environmental protection, culture and education, the PUBLISIND Federation is one of the most relevant social partners in Romania. The heterogeneous uniqueness of the organizational system has allowed us to ensure the highest representation of the economic, social and professional rights of our members. These are the main reasons why the PUBLISIND Federation applied for a project that brings together for the first time the public and private sector in an innovative way. The project was approved and the implementation began.



## Secondly: WHY Workin Index?



The PUBLISIND Federation aims to continue its efforts to improve the social dialogue mechanism that is so relevant in identifying solutions that improve working conditions, ensure decent wages, and also increase the efficiency and professional performance of employees in the area public services. Thus, was born the idea of carrying out a project to intensify the quality of the representation process by strengthening the operational capacity of trade unions, but also to transfer good practices expertise from the Norwegian partner. The specific objectives are:

- Ensuring a framework of expertise and promotion of the decent work agenda through trainings, promotional campaigns, but also through the development of specific tools, such as the measurement index of decent work agenda and labor rights
- Strengthening social dialogue and cooperation by ensuring the transfer of good practices by developing methodologies to promote decent work agenda among stakeholders as well as providing trainings dedicated to trade unions in the public and private sectors in order to increase the quality of the workers' representation process
- Developing and sustaining a public policy proposal to increase the level of involvement of trade unions in facilitating access to employment for young people, in harmonizing labor demand and stabilizing the younger labor force

## And thirdly: WHY this partnership?

The PUBLISIND Federation definitely needed experienced partners, with know-how, with good practices, with different visions, but also from different activity environments: private and public. Therefore, FSLR and YS were the best choice in the mutual engagement of a successful partnership, after which the results would be as expected.

FSLR (the Federation of Free Trade Unions from Romania) is a trade union federation representing trade union members from 3 economic sectors, as follows: textiles, shipbuilding and auto-subcomponents. It is affiliated to the nationally representative trade union confederation of the National Trade Union Bloc. The entire governing structure is involved in the activity of the federation based on a voluntary activity; a situation found since their establishment. The members are from the private sector, FFTU is involved exclusively in the private sector. The federation's activity is based on a statute of organization approved and administered by members in a democratic manner. The Federation integrates 8 member trade unions. The number of trade union members which are in FFTU is about 10,000. The federation's objectives are to represent the economic, social and cultural interests of trade union members, the federation being an active member and involved both at national and sectorial level within the social dialogue institution.



YS (Yrkesorganisasjonenes Sentralforbund) negotiates pay and working conditions on behalf of 220,000 members in 13 YS associations. YS is one of four main organizations on the employee side and is partly politically independent. YS negotiate pay and working conditions and work politically and academically with pensions, education and competence, inclusive working life, HSE (health, environment and safety), gender equality, labor market and welfare schemes. YS participate in the tripartite cooperation between organized employees, employers and the authorities to contribute to value creation and a fair working life. In Workin Index project YS will bring in researchers, trainers for cooperation and best example practice from Norway (where that can be found). Work together with Romanian partners in conferences, training sessions, workshops and study visits. YS will ensure availability of different experts which will provide knowledge and good practice examples in different activities foreseen.



FSLR



## The opening conference



Only 11 days before the declaration of the state of emergency at national level on the background of COVID-19 in Romania, the management team of the Workin Index project managed to tick the development of the opening conference of the project, in a narrower framework, but in accordance with what was foreseen.

Thus, on March 5, 2020, at the National Library of Romania, the activities of the opening conference of the project took place, where the partners were presented, the objectives were detailed, some topics of interest for the participants were raised

and subsequent contacts were established for further collaborations.

The actual agenda of the event contained the presentation of the main objectives of the project, the methodology that will lead to obtaining the expected results, the promotion methods of the Decent Work Agenda, the role of the social partners in designing and implementation of employment policies, the problem of young people on the labor market; and the last part of the Opening Conference was dedicated to the presentation of the Nordic model a social dialogue and the Norwegian Decent Work Agenda.

The opening conference was attended by representatives and members of the partners as well as other guests involved in promoting Decent Work and Social Dialogue from Romania.



# Meetings – management & research

## ONLINE, OFFLINE

The 1st management meeting within the Workin Index project took place on the 3rd & 4th of March 2020. Productive and constructive discussions, which were going to lead to the achievement of the objectives within the Workin Index project. The schedule of activities was established, plans were drawn up, visions were laid out, the necessary resources were discussed.

BUT meanwhile, the COVID-19 changed the plans.

All the debates, discussions, structures, ideas, tables, indicators, values and dimensions were continued

online, being approached topics planned from a meeting to another. This period, until the context will allow it, the team (both management and research) continues to work in order to connect classes, dimensions, values, intervals, according to the sketch already elaborated, to prepare reports and analysis. The classes were approached theoretically, following the analysis described, trying to formulate dimensions as suggestive as possible and eventually identifying alternative ways of measurement. Until now there were analyzed the job strain and health and safety at work, regarding the research part. On the management side, the reporting is being prepared in order to finalize it at the end of June, as established between partners.



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## COVID-19 pandemic impact on the industrial relations system

The implications of the COVID 19 pandemic reach far beyond the medical sphere, indicating, in the near future, an economic crisis that is expected to be large-scale. Unlike the economic crisis of 2009, it is considered to be much more difficult to manage because it affects both demand (amid declining consumption of goods and services), and supply (due to declining output of goods and services). All this will generate significant shocks in the labour market, shocks that will directly influence the system of industrial relations, which will have to adapt to the new economic conditions. Significant and abrupt compression of demand will influence the activity of companies in the sense that they will have significant difficulties in surviving.



The situation is not the same in all economic sectors. There is a much greater impact in sectors like tourism or air transport compared to the trade sector or certain sectors of the manufacturing industry, such as clothing. Mobility, an imperative characteristic necessary in any economic system implemented in a global market, has been severely affected by border restrictions. Workers can no longer travel to work, and the supply and production chains fractured. This situation must be considered in a framework where there is a real competition at regional level for the territorial integration of global production flows, and thus the impact generated by the COVID 19 pandemic will be, without a doubt, global. Economic complementarity, another characteristic of paramount importance in today's global economy, has also been affected by the interrupted production flows. We can easily identify states that innovate and states that manufacture, the latter being states in which the macroeconomic competitive advantage targets cheap and well-skilled labour. This is easily visible at the level of the European Union where economic complementarity is a main principle for the European economy, in which the western states innovate, and the eastern ones manufacture those western innovations.

The reactions of a state to mitigate the economic impact generated by COVID 19 pandemic were aimed at providing fiscal facilities, state-guaranteed interest loans, investment loans, etc. In general, most support programs for economic recovery focused on the business environment and the protection of companies' competitiveness, considering that they must be helped to overcome this period. At the same time, the number of measures aimed at protecting the interests of workers was almost non-existent, the main focus being placed on companies. It is obvious that we will see changes in industrial relations systems in the near future, given the significant market tensions.

Flexibility will become the most debated variable throughout discussions and negotiations between unions and employers. Social organizations are also built for a coherent management of social conflict, so this situation is an opportunity to promote the role and importance of trade unions in society, generally and in a crisis situation. Unions must ensure an ethical balance in terms of bearing the costs of the economic crisis, and defending this balance has to be the ultimate goal for trade unions in the coming period.

*Florian Marin – president of FSLR*

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# VIEWS

One of the major cultural changes that is supposed to follow is that many employees whose jobs allow it, will continue working from home most of the time.

Would time pressure (mentioned within the project's analysis) increase or decrease for an employee working from home, not working from... "work"? Is it a threat or an opportunity for the employer? Is it a plus or a minus? For who? Please give some short arguments for your answer.



**Mirela Caravan** – member of the management team, international relations at the National Trade Union Bloc

"I think remote work is a very complex type of workplace flexibility that requires careful planning and management approaches. Remote work seems to have beneficial effects on many outcomes, such as perceived autonomy and lower work-family conflict, but before allowing employees to work remotely, organizations should review policies around performance evaluation, working time and conditions, promotion and salary increases, to ensure they compare to the benefits for on-site workers. That's where unions must DEFINITELY have a very strong voice in bargaining for collective agreements, both in the public and private sectors, and in monitoring the enforcement of

fair working conditions and regulations.

However, the onus for making remote work a success does not fall solely on employers. Employees also need to cultivate effective routines, set boundaries with managers, colleagues and family members, and make an effort to stay socially and professionally engaged. Remote work is a management tool, and when it is done well, remote work has the potential to improve performance, increase employee satisfaction and benefit a business."



**Alexandru Gurgu** – member of the management team within the project, president of the SANAB Trade Union

"Working from home or telework is a new challenge for Romanian employees and employers. From my point of view, there are also advantages and disadvantages compared to the activity carried out at the initial workplace, both for employers and employees. Employees may be more mentally relaxed when working from home and may have better productivity although technically they may have problems (communication, technical troubleshooting, etc.) and also higher expenses (energy consumption, utilities, etc.). Employers can benefit by limiting utility consumption related to employee maintenance and achieving better productivity, but they can also have

disadvantages in the sense that they have to supervise the employee during the program (in terms of health and safety at work, etc. )."



**Cosmin Andreica** – researcher within the project, president of the Europol trade union

"The coronavirus pandemic produced effects especially on labor relations, as the main measures applied that affected countries were those of distancing and limiting the interaction between people. Many of the jobs were affected by the reduction in consumption or the prevention rules imposed, which led to significant changes that employers had to apply. Among them is telework or various forms of it. In any case, we are clearly talking about "work from home" as employees perceive it.

If in the first instance, most employees were delighted that they will work from home, but later on, after some days, there were adverse reactions in terms of efficiency and the context in which they can perform work tasks. Among the advantages of working from home we can list, eliminating the stress of being under the observation of the employer, the possibility to plan the work of the day or the comfort of your own home. At the same time, the disadvantages were related to the inability to efficiently organize their work tasks due to factors beyond the control of employees (family members, insufficient logistics, etc.), deficiency in focusing on the tasks they have to perform or the disappearance of the rigor generated by the lack of coordination at the regular workplace.

The conclusion that emerges, however, tends to increase the pressure on the employee who performs work from home, becomes inefficient in performing tasks, increases the time to perform tasks and disappears psychologically, the employee's perception between the workplace and personal space of the home."



**Elena Marinescu** – member of the management team within the project

"Yes or no on time pressure in the context of working at home. Time pressure can increase during work from home for two reasons: firstly because of the change in resources made available to the employee: working from home means that the employee works with other resources (limited in this respect) compared to office resources (a printer or other physical resources that help him/her in his work); secondly, the pressure of time has a gender significance: more precisely, for employed women, working from home means possible interruptions caused by childcare work (with attention here to the interruption of the activity of nurseries and kindergartens).

And no, the pressure of time is not felt when working from home by default an employee no longer loses some time on the way to work (which can be a stressful factor); moreover, the employee can organize his/her activities so that he can cover them in a normal working day (in order to limit other activities in the state of emergency).

Working from home can be a plus for the employer (if we refer to the kind of work that can be done from home). I believe that working from home is a plus for both the employee and the employer: for the employer: the results of the work can be positive (even better than from office work); for the employee: working from home can be "easier" because it is performed in a familiar setting (the argument is of course supported in homes where there is no domestic violence, physical or verbal abuse, etc.). Probably (I think) that the introduction of work at home in the context of the pandemic (COVID-19) can be an innovative discovery that will serve in the future as a tool for many employers."

## NORWAY | COVID-19 | WORK

The Norwegian Prime Minister announced the lifting of various restrictions imposed until this very moment. Most of the restrictive emergency measures are in process of being relaxed, like the opening of schools or kindergartens for the little children, or some businesses. Thus, the new normal seems to begin somewhere at 15th of June 2020. From the relaxing measures taken now, we could mention that the recommended size of groups in private contexts is increased from five to twenty people, sports halls can open, but changing facilities must be kept closed, international travel not advised yet but the ban on foreign travel for health professionals is lifted, the home quarantine is reduced from 14 to 10 days and organized training sessions for professional football can be held. About work in Norway, the government recommends for employees to work from home wherever is possible and if not, the employers have to respect strict regulations about distance between workers during a working day. And also Norway's government has decided to allow seasonal workers in the agricultural sector to enter the country, as the number of infections from the Coronavirus in the country is already slowing down.

<https://www.lifeinnorway.net/> | <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/>



## NEW cross sector agreement on digitalization



EPSU voted within ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation), for supporting a new cross-sector agreement on digitalization, covering public service workers. In the actual context, so many employees all over Europe started to telework in a very short time and it is a known fact that most of the had no accurate procedures concerning the health and safety equipment. And indeed, this is a real issue for the trade unions, being a risk so that employers will make this measure a permanent one. The scope of this agreement is to avoid job losses, making sure that all public sector workers are covered. "The digitalisation agreement underlines that any new

working arrangements, changes to working conditions or work relations linked to digitalisation should be subject to a joint process of assessment and action by employers and trade unions. It also confirms that action should taken in relation to any existing digital tools or processes "where there are concerns about the impacts on working conditions and health and safety needing urgent attention."". The details of the agreement include: jointly managed process, digital skills and securing employment, modalities of connecting and disconnecting, artificial intelligence and guaranteeing the human in control principle and respect of human dignity and surveillance.

<http://epsu.org/>

## "Europe, it's you, it's us, it's all of us together"

**President of the European Council Michel Charles**

With the Europe Day occasion, messages were sent by leaders of the European Union. Let's mention some of them.

"Europe means freedom, tolerance, openness, diversity, respect, innovation, creativity, dynamism. Europe is also about solidarity and unity. Europe, it's you, it's us, it's all of us together."

**Charles Michel, President of the European Council**

*"For me, Europe is home. For my parents Europe was peace. For my generation, Europe is freedom and the rule of law. And for my children Europe is the future and open-mindedness. This is what I'm fighting for. Long live Europe!"*

**Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European Commission**

*"Schuman's lessons for us lie in his courage. Today, on Europe Day, I say to our governments and institutions: be brave, be ambitious. That is the only way to restore confidence among our citizens who want to return to normal life and build a better future."*

**David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament**



## SOME FINAL numbers about WORKIN INDEX



The project Workin Index, supported by Norway through the Norway Grants 2014-2021, in the frame of the Programme “Social Dialogue – Decent Work”, has the following envisaged outcomes of the program:

- Improved social dialogue and cooperation
- Enhanced implementation of the decent work agenda (fair and decent working conditions)
- Facilitated access to employment
- Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the program

The creation of a worker rights measurement index, the decent work promotion campaign and the training provided provide a framework for assimilation, promotion and respect for the decent work are contributing to job stability and higher levels income. The project provides innovative tools and knowledge which contributes to improving social dialogue and co-operation, to implementing and measuring decent work, and to increasing trade union involvement in employment policies. These tools and knowledge will make a direct contribution to business competitiveness, in a positive sense, also for reducing the risk of unemployment and to strengthening social peace. The project is one that contributes to raising the quality of life and general well-being by increasing the quality of employee representation process and strengthening the organizational capacity of trade unions. Increasing the quality of the representation process contributes to the increase of the income level, implicitly of the taxes paid to the state budget and of the revenues to the state budget and to the employees' level.

The project duration is 2 years and it has a budget of 289.960 eur (with 10% co-financing). There are foreseen so many outputs, like: the research in order to determine the Decent Work Index, applying questionnaires, workshops, establishing the Decent Work Index, campaigns for promoting the Decent Work Index and the Agenda, procedures for developing an Agenda regarding the Decent Work, trainings connected to Decent Work, study visits, researches for establishing the policy proposals, workshops in order to present the policy.

In the end, we could say that the novelty factors:

- The project addresses both the public and private sector
- The aim is to build an indicator to measure respect for the rights of employees
- Increasing the competence of representativeness involved in negotiation contracts and collective agreements through trainings
- Approach from a syndical perspective of the youth employment policies in the labor field

The index will be measure decent work characteristics, being the first of such initiative, the result being an absolute innovation.

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## PUBLISIND is a strong organization



FEDERAȚIA  
**PUBLISIND**

The PUBLISIND Federation is a federally organized trade union, structured in regions and fields of activity, whose strategy and functioning is harmonized with the applicable legislative dynamics in the trade union field, following coagulation / expansion of the trade union movement, especially in the public sector. The unique, very heterogeneous structure of the organization system allowed ensuring the protection at the highest level of economic, social and rights members, although the coordination of actions shows a high degree of difficulty given the major differences between the particularities of the represented fields.

The obtained results ensured the acquisition of representativeness in two sectors of activity in Romania, respectively social assistance and public administration. International bodies and organizations”, but also at the level of 5 groups of units in Justice, Police, Penitentiary Police, Social assistance, Sports and Youth.

With regard to collective bargaining, the PUBLISIND Federation is signatory of 5 collective agreements at unit group level and over 40 collective agreements at the level of unit, covering over 250,000 employees.

In the future, the PUBLISIND Federation aims to continue to work for improving social dialogue mechanisms, so relevant in identifying solutions to improve working conditions, to ensure an appropriate salary and increase efficiency/professional performance of the employees from the public service. Also an important component is represented by the need to assume an active role of the syndical organization in providing professional and advanced training programs, but also education of employees from Romania.



“Last year in June, the International Labour Organization, the 187 Member States adopted the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, calling on the organization to pursue “with unrelenting vigour its constitutional mandate for social justice by further developing its human-centred approach to the future of work, which puts workers’ rights and the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies”. A year later, COVID-19 plunged the world into a crisis of unprecedented scope and scale that have made the imperatives of the Centenary Declaration even more urgent as we engage in a collective fight against the devastating human dimensions of the pandemic.”



<https://www.ilo.org/>

### European Commission – economic forecast



“The coronavirus pandemic represents a major shock for the global and EU economies, with very severe socio-economic consequences. Despite the swift and comprehensive policy response at both EU and national level, the EU economy will experience a recession of historic proportions this year.”

While short-time work schemes, wage subsidies and support for businesses should help to limit job losses, the coronavirus pandemic will have a severe impact on the labour market.

The unemployment rate in the euro area is forecast to rise from 7.5% in 2019 to 9½% in 2020 before declining again to 8½% in 2021. In the EU, the unemployment rate is forecast to rise from 6.7% in 2019 to 9% in 2020 and then fall to around 8% in 2021.

Some Member States will see more significant increases in unemployment than others. Those with a high proportion of workers on short-term contracts and those where a large proportion of the workforce depend on tourism are particularly vulnerable. Young people entering the workforce at this time will also find it harder to secure their first job.

This forecast is based on a set of technical assumptions concerning exchange rates, interest rates and commodity prices with a cut-off date of 23 April. For all other incoming data, including assumptions about government policies, this forecast takes into consideration information up until and including 22 April. Unless policies are credibly announced and specified in adequate detail, the projections assume no policy changes.

<https://ec.europa.eu/>

Full document: [Spring 2020 Economic Forecast](#)

[www.norwaygrants.org](http://www.norwaygrants.org)



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#### The PUBLISIND Federation

*within the WORKIN INDEX PROJECT - supported by Norway through the Norway Grants 2014-2021, in the frame of the Programme “Social Dialogue – Decent Work”*

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