

European Union – Albania
15TH SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
INNOVATION, INFORMATION SOCIETY, SOCIAL POLICY

1 February 2024

Venue: Tirana and Online

AGENDA

PART I – VTC Oral Session

Connection of participants: 9.00 – 9.15

Opening – Introductory remarks and approval of the Agenda (9.15 – 9.25)

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POLICY (9.25 – 10.15)

1. Participation in EU Programmes

- a) Participation in EU Research Framework Programme Horizon Europe 2021-2027
- Promotion of Horizon Europe
 - Participation of Albania in Horizon Europe (statistics by European Commission)
 - b) Status of the new 2023-2030 national strategy on scientific research and innovation

2. Framework Conditions of cooperation and compliance with the European Research Area priorities

- Level of investments in research from public and private sector
- Adoption of the law on scientific research – state of play
- Measures taken to increase capacity building in the field of research and innovation.

Progress on Smart Specialisation Strategy development

SOCIAL CO-OPERATION (10.15 – 13.10)

1. Legal approximation of Albanian legislation to EU Labour law, OSH

- Progress in legislative alignment and implementation, future plans

State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate: Staff, Inspections

2. Legal approximation of Albanian legislation to Freedom of Movement for workers

Progress in legislative alignment and implementation

3. Social dialogue : bipartite and tripartite

- Specialised committees of the National Labour Council
- Functioning of the Regional Tripartite Councils

Coffee break 11.15 – 11.30

4. Employment policy

- Recovery under the pressure of increased commodity and energy prices and inflation: preserving jobs, progress on implementing ERP guidance of 2023.
- Active-labour market policies and vocational training
- Exit Strategy from Economic Aid Scheme
- Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan: state of play, update on implementation.
- National Agency for Employment and Skills: Set up, staffing and functioning.
- National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 and its Action Plan: Update on the implementation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour Force Survey (LFS): Availability of the data on INSTAT and on job vacancies - Child labour monitoring and activities taken to eliminate child labour
<p>5. Vocational Education and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operationalisation of the VET Law: state of play of preparation/adoption of pending secondary legislation - Optimisation Plan of VET providers and restructuring of VET providers - Establishment of Sectoral Skills Committees - Functioning of the National Agency of Vocational Education, Trainings and Qualifications (NAVET-Q): update, including staffing
<p>6. Social protection and inclusion (including people with disabilities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Aid: state of play of implementation of the roadmap: Impact Assessment of the benefits' adequacy; adjustment of benefits, establishment of a mechanism for their regular annual review. - Exit Strategy: Active inclusion of beneficiaries. - Reform of social care services: state of play; implementation of ERP 2023 policy guidance. - Social Protection Strategy: Implementation, Progress, and design of the new 2024-2030 national strategy on social protection - Local social care plans: Effectiveness and Outreach
<p><i>Lunch break 13.10 – 14.10</i></p>
<p>INFORMATION SOCIETY AND MEDIA (14.10 – 15.10)</p>
<p>1. Information society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment with the European Electronic Communications Code - Implementation of the national broadband plan and alignment to EU Broadband Cost Reduction Directive, and establishment of a Broadband Competence Office - Information society services: new e-government law - Cyber Security: New law, National Strategy, Plans - Digital Agenda 2022-2026: State of play - Information society statistics: state of play
<p>2. Electronic communications networks and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the 112 European emergency number - Independence and financing of Electronic and Postal Communications Authority (AKEP)
<p>3. Audiovisual policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency of media financing, including state advertising. Independence and competences of regulator and public broadcaster
<p><i>Coffee break 15.10 – 15.20</i></p>
<p>EDUCATION AND TRAINING (15.20-17.30)</p>
<p>1. Benchmarks for evaluation of education and training performance and policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Table of Education and Training 2023 indicators and other statistics on education
<p>2. Implementation of pre-university education reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State of play: National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and Action Plan - Enrolment rates and quality of early childhood education and care - Teacher training for primary and secondary education - Inclusive education: access to quality education for Roma & Egyptians, marginalised or disadvantaged groups and students with special needs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update on digital transformation of education: development of digital skills and of a digital education ecosystem. - Secondary legislation of VET law, and the optimisation of the VET system to increase labour market relevance
<p>3. Implementation of Higher Education reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the reform on Higher Education: main achievements and challenges - State of play: National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and Action Plan
<p>4. Erasmus+ Results from call 2023 (Albanian participation) and opportunities in call 2024</p>
<p>5. Policy priorities in the field of Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the Strategy for Culture 2019-2025 - Status of preparation of bylaws regarding the implementation of the Law on Cultural Heritage and Museums - Creative Europe programme participation
<p>6. Youth policy development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2022-2029 and its Action plan - Implementation of the Law on youth

PART II – Written Procedure

SOCIAL CO-OPERATION

1. *Legal approximation of Albanian legislation to EU Labour law, OSH*

- ILO Convention no. 190 on Violence and Harassment (Level of national legislation alignment after the ratification of the convention) **WRITTEN**
- Update on new policy framework on OSH (in line with the new EU OSH strategic priorities): **WRITTEN**

2. *Social dialogue*

- Update on discussions and capacities of the National Labour Council (NLC) **WRITTEN**
- Follow-up on the update of NLC recommendations by policy-makers **WRITTEN**

3. *Employment policy*

- Employment and labour market situation **WRITTEN**
- Measures taken related to the energy and war of aggression against Ukraine crisis in the context of the economic aid scheme **WRITTEN**
- Social Fund for Employment of people with disabilities: update **WRITTEN**

4. *Vocational Education and Training*

- Employment of VET graduates **WRITTEN**
- Training of VET teachers: update **WRITTEN**
- Measures taken to increase the inclusion of vulnerable persons/ gender equality in VET, especially in rural areas **WRITTEN**
- Outsourcing of vocational training courses to private providers/NGOs: state of play **WRITTEN**
- Post-secondary/non-tertiary VET provision **WRITTEN**
- Donor supported projects in the area of VET and their linkage to national objectives; scaling up of best practices from donor supported projects **WRITTEN**

5. *Social protection and inclusion (including people with disabilities)*

- Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) – publication dates, availability of the data on INSTAT **WRITTEN**
- Functioning of the Social Fund: state of play (fund allocation and disbursement to municipalities, midterm budget plan). **WRITTEN**
- State of play of social services: availability per region / municipality, measures taken to ensure inclusion and accessibility **WRITTEN**
- Law on Public Procurement and sublegal act related to social care services: state of play - **WRITTEN**
- Number of social enterprises financially supported by the Social Fund. **WRITTEN**
- Reform of Disability Assessment: state of play, deployment; implementation of the law on accessibility- **WRITTEN**
- The new policy on Social Inclusion: state of play and linkages with the EU SILC **WRITTEN**
- Health care: health insurance coverage; the accessibility, adequacy and affordability of healthcare services; out-of-pocket expenses; development in the number of health-care personnel, especially doctors **WRITTEN**
- Progress in implementing ERP 2023 policy guidance **WRITTEN**

6. *Movement of workers*

- Law on foreigners: movement of workers (equal treatment and equal conditions) **WRITTEN**
- Co-ordination of social security systems **WRITTEN**
- EURES: preparation **WRITTEN**

7. *Updates on legal approximation with the EU *acquis* under chapter 2 and 19 following the screening progress* **WRITTEN**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of amended laws, adopted by-laws, strategies and action plans WRITTEN
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POLICY
<p>1. Framework Conditions of cooperation and compliance with the European Research Area priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efforts to produce statistics and reliable data on science and technology (e.g. on the missing indicators for the European Innovation Scoreboard) WRITTEN - Open access and open data WRITTEN
INFORMATION SOCIETY AND MEDIA
<p>1. Information society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative capacity building and digitalisation of the Public Administration (Ministry, NAIS) WRITTEN
<p>2. Electronic communications networks and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy/strategy and institutional developments WRITTEN - Spectrum policy and implementation, frequency allocation and assignment, National Frequency Plan state of play in particular, Migration Strategy for the release of the 700 MHz (including the timeline for the release), progress on Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), coordination with neighbouring countries concerning the 700 MHz band and DAB WRITTEN - Implementation of the digital switchover and use of digital dividend - WRITTEN - Market developments (fixed, mobile, internet, broadband, incl. data on network coverage, subscriber take-up and investment) WRITTEN
<p>3. Audiovisual policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of digitalisation strategy, process of allocating frequencies and development of the National Frequency Plan by the Audiovisual Media Authority AMA WRITTEN
<p>4. Update and results of EU and donor assistance - EUD WRITTEN</p>
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
<p>1. Implementation of pre-university education reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State of play: implementation of textbook reform WRITTEN - State of play: IIEP's Education Sector Analysis WRITTEN
<p>2. Implementation of Higher Education reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on the progress made towards the implementation of the bylaws under the "University Pact Implementation of the law on higher education WRITTEN - Recognition of Academic Qualifications Cooperation between Higher Education institutions and business sector WRITTEN
<p>3. Youth policy development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth policy and participation in youth policy activities WRITTEN - Update: establishment of new Youth Centres WRITTEN
<p>4. Participation in international standardised tests (PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, TALIS, ICILS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lessons learnt and actions undertaken to address findings of PISA 2018 and 2022, PIRLS 2021, TIMSS 2019 WRITTEN - Participation in ongoing and upcoming rounds of international assessments (PISA 2025, TALIS 2024, TIMSS 2023) WRITTEN