Programme of work 2003

This document gives an overview of the activities planned by the Foundation for 2003 within the framework of its four-year programme 2001-2004, *Analysing and anticipating change to support socio-economic progress*.

The programme of work for 2003 was approved by the Administrative Board at its meeting on 25 October 2002.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions is an autonomous body of the European Union, created to assist the formulation of future policy on social and work-related matters. Further information can be found at the Foundation website at http://www.eurofound.eu.int
Introduction

This is the third annual programme of work based on the 2001-2004 four-year programme. Within this framework, work in 2003 will be guided by the following principles. The intention is thus to:

- Continue strengthening the four main pillars of the Foundation’s work (the three core areas of living conditions, working conditions, industrial relations and European Monitoring Centre on Change - EMCC);
- Build on progress achieved in 2001 and 2002 and to move towards the consolidation of results;
- Undertake monitoring activities and strategic research in each core area;
- Concentrate on fewer and more substantial research programmes;
- Conduct more internal analysis of Foundation data and findings to meet specific needs of key policy audiences, thereby strengthening the Foundation’s capacity to respond at shorter notice to their information requirements;
- Incorporate candidate countries in all main areas of activity;
- Increase existing collaboration with the European Commission and strengthen relationships with the other EU Institutions;
- Reinforce the Foundation’s role as a forum for debate;
- Develop objective criteria for the ongoing evaluation of the Foundation’s performance and integrate this into a number of projects from various areas of work;
- Implement a coherent and consistent communications strategy;
- Commence preliminary work on the structure and content of the 2005-2008 programme.

Each of the three core areas will:

- Make effective use of the Foundation’s monitoring tools, ensuring that the results of such monitoring activities are easily accessible and also used across all areas of the Foundation’s work;
- Implement strategic research initiatives, building, where appropriate, on work started in 2001 and 2002;
- Contribute to transversal developmental activity, completing the project on the implications of the knowledge-based society on working conditions, living conditions and industrial relations, and assessing work on the theme of mobility and migration within and into the European Union;
- Contribute to the Foundation’s function as a forum for debate within its tripartite structure.

The European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC) will move in 2003 to its operational stage, building on input from the three core areas as well as from external sources.

The Foundation will reinforce the inclusion of candidate countries in its work, mainly in its monitoring tools and in its debates (seminars, conferences, Foundation Forum), with additional funds from the Commission’s PHARE programme. This will strengthen the Foundation’s cooperation with these countries, alerting its stakeholders to concerns and issues, which might arise once full membership becomes a reality.

The information and communications strategy will be enhanced in 2003. The objective will be to ensure that the Foundation’s work is disseminated in a way that responds more effectively to the information needs of
policy makers, especially at European Union level. Emphasis will be placed on designing information that is appropriate in style, format, medium and timing to different groups and their varying needs.

In implementing this programme, the Foundation will liaise and, where appropriate, will cooperate with the services of the European Commission and with other EU bodies, including CEDEFOP -The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Thessaloniki) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (Bilbao).
Living conditions

Overview

The main focus in 2003 will be on the analysis of the data gathered through the representative, interview-based survey on living conditions and quality of life in the EU and in candidate countries. This data will be available in the second half of 2003, and first issue-oriented analyses will be developed from then onwards. Strategic research projects begun in 2001/2002 will be followed through to their dissemination stage, while the existing project on a new organisation of time throughout working life will be further developed and also linked to the new transversal project Company survey on time. Data collected through the monitoring activities will also be used to support the strategic research.

Monitoring activities

Using the existing Foundation database on ‘Quality of life in the EU’, reports will be made available in 2003, supplemented by an analysis based on Eurobarometer data from the candidate countries.

- The data from the first Foundation survey of Monitoring living conditions and quality of life in the EU and in candidate countries will become available and the analysis of this data will begin.
- The survey on living conditions and quality of life in the EU will be linked to existing work undertaken in other areas of the Foundation to strengthen analysis of the interrelationships between the quality of living conditions and the quality of working conditions.

Strategic research

Employment in care of children and older people living at home
This project continues earlier Foundation work on employment in household services. It will monitor and analyse measures to increase the provision of quality care for children and older people living at home, in particular by examining improvements in the supply of care workers.

New organisation of time over working life
A conference will debate the issues researched so far. Additional work will concentrate specifically on the living conditions aspects of new ways of organising working time over the life course. Analysis and reporting from this project will also draw on results from other surveys by the Foundation, in companies and in communities.

Illness and inclusion
This project, which started in 2002, has reviewed the contribution of policy measures and initiatives to improving the employment situation and social inclusion of people with chronic illness and disability. Particular attention has been paid to the scale and nature of the problems facing people with illness and the key measures taken by public and private actors. In 2003 the results of the project will be discussed and disseminated through workshops, possibly with the additional aim of identifying the potential for new research work in this area.

Strategies to combat social exclusion and unemployment in disadvantaged regions
In this new project the main emphasis will be on links between existing strategies to combat social exclusion and unemployment in disadvantaged regions and on the strengthening of local-level social capital (i.e. social relations and networks). This project may be of special interest to candidate countries.
Overview

The major emphasis in 2003 will be on creating an observatory on working conditions, centred and building on the monitoring tools for quality of work and employment, which the Foundation has developed over the past 12 years. The results from the Foundation’s regular surveys and other research on working conditions, supplemented with data from external sources, will thus form the main knowledge base. The aim behind such an observatory is to make this knowledge more visible and more easily accessible to the Foundation’s target audiences.

The results from the sectoral surveys on working conditions in road transport, hotels and restaurants will be debated in 2003 as will the results from the reviews on the working poor and harassment/violence in the workplace.

The technical work on indicators, *For a better quality of working life*, which commenced in 2001, will continue in 2003 and additional literature reviews will enhance the work being undertaken on negotiating the conditions of flexibility.

Monitoring activities

Observatory on working conditions
Over the last 12 years the Foundation has developed tools to monitor developments in the area of quality of work and employment. This monitoring activity, mainly based on surveys carried out every five years throughout the European Union, has provided a platform from which to develop more in-depth research and has enabled policy makers to gain a better understanding of changes and challenges in the field. Facilitating use of all the information produced or collected by the Foundation as well as improved visibility of this work is required and can be achieved through creating an on-line observatory, which can:

- make Foundation and potentially other relevant information more accessible to its users;
- provide a consistent and regularly updated flow of information;
- support debate and discussion on the issues monitored and researched.

The working conditions team will begin development of an observatory on working conditions in 2003 and will support this by establishing a network of correspondents across the EU. The observatory will be web-based.

Branch surveys on working conditions
The two sectors studied in 2002 were road transport and hotels and restaurants. The methodology consisted of using qualitative (literature reviews, case studies) and quantitative (national and European statistics) material, as well as interviews with key actors at national and EU level in each sector. It also included a review of collective agreements through EIRO. The results of this work will be presented and debated in 2003.

Indicators on quality of working life
The technical work on developing qualitative and quantitative indicators on quality of working life (comparable on a European level) will continue.
Strategic research

Negotiating the conditions of flexibility
Previous work on this issue has:

- identified the strategies of the different actors involved in the implementation and design of flexibility strategies at various levels;
- analysed their impact;
- documented the main tools (collective bargaining agreements, public policies to encourage/adapt certain forms of flexibility, company policies, etc.) that are used to reconcile flexibility and security as well as the different parties’ interests.

In 2003 additional perspectives such as the role of fiscal policies and/or the perceived trend towards individualisation of social protection rights will be studied through reviews of existing knowledge and practice.

Review on ‘working poor’
The results of the review of existing literature in 2002 on employed persons on low incomes and/or in a vulnerable social security position, who may qualify for supplementary income support because of their financial/social situation, will be discussed at a policy-oriented seminar in 2003.

Review on harassment/violence in the workplace
This review, carried out in 2002, was based on:

- research on the causes, background and effects of harassment/violence;
- legislation and other initiatives at national or European level;
- examples of good practice in the area;
- potential barriers to the implementation of guidelines.

The results will be debated in a conference in 2003.
Overview

The work programme for 2003 will continue the development and improvement of the industrial relations monitoring instruments. The European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) will continue to provide information on developments in industrial relations, while the cross-country comparisons will focus on topics of current importance at European level. Work on the industrial relations glossaries will continue, completing the EU volume and the strategic reorientation of the glossaries and the related EMIRE database. The most recent agreements will be added to the European Works Councils database and a debate will be organised on the results of the associated case study research.

Strategic research to be undertaken in 2003 will see a continuation of work on the modernisation and quality of industrial relations, a review of new developments in European Works Councils, and further work on financial participation.

Monitoring activities

EIRO: European Industrial Relations Observatory

The following themes are proposed for comparative studies in 2003:

- Collective bargaining on occupational pensions for certain categories of workers (atypical workers, teleworkers etc.);
- Regulation of Internet use by employees (including privacy issues, email, web use etc. and employees’ personal data);
- Annualisation of working time;
- Collective bargaining on childcare and parental leave, working time (the Directives and their impact on collective agreements);
- Industrial relations in a specific sector;
- Employers’ organisations (e.g. membership, ‘density’, bargaining, coverage of sectors/types of firms, changes arising from industrial restructuring);
- Equality plans at the workplace.

Additional EIRO activities in 2003 will involve:

- A new product - the structured features - of which five–six a year will provide more demand driven information for EIRO users;
- Production of the annual updates;
- Extension of EIRO to more candidate countries;
- Development of more in-house analytical work based on EIRO records;
Industrial relations

- Implementation of the plan to ensure gender issues are dealt with effectively (gender mainstreaming);
- Preparation (jointly with the European Commission) of a 2002 status report on industrial relations in the EU;
- Comparative report on industrial relations systems and key issues on the IR agenda in the EU, USA and Japan;
- Strengthening the link between EIRO and the development of strategic research in the industrial relations field.

European employment and industrial relations glossaries
2003 will see the completion of the EU volume in addition to the finalisation of a common set of concepts for the updating of the existing glossaries and possible extension to the candidate countries. The related EMIRE database will also be updated and linked more closely to the EIRO database.

European Works Councils (EWCs)
The cases collected and analysed to date will be discussed in a seminar in 2003, focusing on the actual functioning of European Works Councils in practice. Information on additional EWCs will be added to the database.

Strategic research

Financial participation
Following earlier Foundation work, which identified key barriers to the wider dissemination of forms of financial participation, it is proposed to focus on new developments in financial participation, including SMEs.

The quality of industrial relations
Further work on quality indicators of industrial relations will be undertaken in 2003. Given the different perspectives of the social actors, the Foundation will consider the potential for a more thematic approach to developing indicators and workshops will be organised with technical experts and the social actors to examine the options in the light of the indicators developed in previous Foundation studies.

Company survey on time
Recent developments such as working time reduction, the need for a better linkage between working and non-working time, increased working time flexibility, the need to consider other reference periods (weekly, yearly, or life course) are leading to a greater focus on time issues.

It is intended to extend previous Foundation work on time by investigating these issues through a company-based survey. The objective is to:

- complement the Foundation’s existing information by a representative overview of corporate time policies;
- provide insights on new issues, trends and processes;
- examine further the relationships between working and non-working time.

The survey will identify, inter alia, the ways in which non-working time issues are taken into consideration in the organisation of working time and the processes set up to deal with these.

It is proposed to develop the survey in a transversal way as a merged activity involving representatives of each core team and of EMCC.
European Monitoring Centre on Change

Through the four-year programme of the Foundation, EMCC contributes, along with the three core areas of the Foundation’s work, to the central objective of analysing and anticipating change to support socio-economic progress. EMCC aims to identify, assess and process relevant information on the driving forces of industrial, regional and company change, resulting from globalisation, new technologies and changing consumer demand. EMCC also contributes to another important objective of the four-year programme that of responding more effectively to the needs of the social actors at EU level.

The 2003 programme of work for EMCC will consist of five interrelated areas of activity:

- **Information systems**
  This involves the continued development and maintenance of the EMCC Portal and related activities.

- **Research**
  This activity focuses on analyses and content material developed specifically for EMCC.

- **Networking**
  - **Network of companies**
    In 2003 the company network database will be extended and the information available about each company deepened.
  
  - **Network of business schools**
    This project aims to build a network of business schools, agreeing on forms of cooperation and testing these agreements with a limited number of joint pilot projects.

- **Seminars**
  In 2003, EMCC will continue to build its function as a place for practitioners to exchange experience and good practice through the organisation of two workshops, each focused on the outcomes of research work undertaken in 2002.

- **Development activities**
  EMCC will be in a position in 2003 to begin to provide information to, and/or facilitate discussions for, European social partner organisations. EMCC would only become active in this context on the basis of a specific request.
Transversal themes

These themes provide a focus both for Foundation papers, developed in-house on the basis of cross-project analysis of existing work, and also for prioritising new activities. Foundation papers have already been prepared in 2002 in the areas of Promoting better employment and Extending equal opportunities for men and women.

In 2003, further Foundation papers will be developed on

- Managing diversity (0244)
- Supporting social inclusion (0245)
- Examining the changing use of time (0246)

All Foundation papers will continue to be developed in consultation with the relevant advisory committee. They will be based primarily on validated and approved results of previous Foundation work.
Developmental activities

This part of the programme enables the Foundation to explore the potential of new or increasingly significant issues to contribute to the core areas of its work or to EMCC. Two themes have received attention to date and it is anticipated that the results of these will contribute in part to the preparation of the Foundation’s next four-year programme for 2005-2008.

**Working conditions, living conditions and industrial relations in the knowledge society**

The results of this developmental activity will be discussed in a seminar, with the participation of outside experts and research managers of the Foundation. The focus will be on how the core areas and/or EMCC can take up the ideas generated by this exploratory work and if, and how, they could be developed into further, more in-depth, activities.

**Mobility and migration into the EU: social and employment impacts**

A workshop will be organised to debate and explore the issues that have been identified during the first phase of this work.
Information and communication

Each year, in line with its information and communication strategy, the Foundation focuses on a number of selected central themes of relevance to EU social policy. This requires well-coordinated, and efficiently planned, dissemination of the results of the Foundation’s different activities, and a particular focus on those events where the findings will have greatest impact. Improved project-based dissemination planning will be further developed in 2003 to support this process.

The first Foundation Annual Forum, which took place in August 2002, gave rise to a reflection on how to maximise the contribution of such an event to the Foundation’s communication activities. In 2003 it is proposed to organise a number of events in selected Member states offering opportunities for debate on current social issues with a view to holding a second Foundation Annual Forum in 2004. This more extended process of preparation will enable the Foundation to communicate better with its target audiences and to take more account of the diversity of national contexts. It will not only draw more effectively on the Foundation’s accumulated expertise and knowledge, but will also provide a wider forum for others with original and/or controversial ideas.

In 2003 the Foundation will continue its work on improving its understanding of, and its responses to, the information needs of its target groups. During 2003 further steps will be taken to improve targeting, namely, through the further development of:

- National liaison centres, whose tasks are to identify the appropriate persons/organisations to target at Member state level in relation to the findings the Foundation wants to convey, and to follow national developments in order to determine more accurately where and when dissemination and debate emanating from the Foundation could have most impact.
- the Brussels liaison office where the useful experience developed in its first year of operation in 2002 in strengthening contacts at EU level, in particular with the EU Institutions, will be deepened and extended.

Finally, there is a need to focus on specific ‘information carriers’ such as:

- High-level conferences (Presidency events and selected EU conferences) - backed up by event driven press activities, tailored web information and relevant documentation;
- Meetings, hearings and presentations to committees and ad hoc groups at EU level, especially in the European Commission, on strategic subjects related to the social policy agenda. It is noted that 2003, for instance, will be the European year of people with disabilities.
- A programme of publications to ensure that the findings of Foundation work are in the public domain.

Dissemination of Foundation findings at Presidency conferences in 2003 will depend on the programmes of the Greek and Italian Presidencies.

Content management and dissemination

The Foundation has an extensive web presence consisting of Eurofound, EIRO and the EMCC portal. In 2003 a prototype portal for the new observatory on working conditions will be developed and the living conditions survey to be carried out in 2003 will also have a web output. This will require the Foundation to improve the content structure of its web activities to enable users to gain easier access to the whole range of outputs. Improved web search tools, more tailored facilities for users and more external links are planned in 2003 as part of the linked portal development. A user survey will be undertaken to assess current satisfaction and to assist in designing future developments.
In 2003 further development of the information centre will take place to progress the move from a traditional to an electronic library. This will include the establishment of a link database, the development of a web-based catalogue, the setting up of a documentary information network and the integration of external sources into the Foundation’s Intranet.

Production of the newsletter, *Communiqué*, will continue in 2003.

The annual programme of publishing in print and electronic format will continue to be managed from editing and design to typesetting and printing. A variety of publication types is envisaged.

**Language services**

Activities within the language services will mainly comprise management of the Foundation’s translation programme and the further development of the *Terminology database*. The planning of all work will be reviewed by the language services unit with the object of securing the greatest efficiency, quality and economy in the Foundation’s association with the translation centre. There is a need to meet the demand for a larger number of language versions of key Foundation summaries and studies and in 2003 the Foundation will investigate the potential for co-financing of interpretation and translation activities at national level so as to release resources for research.
Evaluation

An external evaluation undertaken in 2001-2 assessed the extent to which the Foundation was achieving its mandate and objectives (Council Regulation 1365/75 and approved work programmes). This has led to the establishment of an action plan with strategic and operational aspects, which is being implemented to remedy problems and strengthen effectiveness. It is also aimed at improving resource allocation and ensuring increased accountability to the stakeholders.

External evaluation of a selected number of major projects from the different areas of the Foundation’s work will be initiated in 2003, subject to resources being available.
European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Programme of work 2003

2003 – 19 pages – 21 x 29,7 cm