



Mission statement

adopted by the General Assembly on 25 November 2023, in Sofia/Bulgaria.

Who we are

The European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) is a non-profit European network of workers' organisations. EZA brings together trade unions, socio-cultural labour organisations and movements, research institutions and educational facilities and acts as social knowledge centre. EZA is a non-governmental organisation which primarily promotes the capacity building of workers' organisations.

Our aims

EZA promotes and supports a policy that safeguards human dignity, human rights and socially responsible individual freedom, based on the fundamental prerequisites of peace, democracy, the rule of law and social justice. The task for EZA is to strengthen social cohesion in Europe.

EZA considers the EU not only as a socio-economic endeavour but also as a community of destiny, life, purpose, responsibility and multicultural learning as well as a common space and a meeting place of multiple identities and wants to contribute to refine the social order in the context of a globalising world. **Europe** is more than a geographical or institutional expression. Above all, the concept of Europe also recalls European traditions and common values. Europe is the recollection of Greek democracy and the Roman Republic, Jewish-Christian history and their intellectual power, the end of the Enlightenment and shaping a common future from an awareness of the roots. Europe is an intellectual meeting place, a common, human centred space, and a mission for peace.

EZA and its member organizations promote social, economic and cultural development, with a focus on the interests of workers and their families.

As far as workers are concerned, EZA wants to achieve and safeguard secure jobs, decent wages that enable people to make a living, humane working conditions, adequate opportunities for education and training, possibilities for workers' participation in companies and authorities, and social security in case of incapacity, unemployment, sickness, care needs and old age.

A pluralistic, gender-appropriate and inclusive society with equal treatment of men and women¹, LGBTIQ+ people, minorities or people with disabilities is a key aim of the European Union (EU), to which EZA is particularly committed in its internal and external work.

Our values

EZA's commitment is based on principles founded in Christian social doctrine, with the human being as a person at the heart of it all. Solidarity and subsidiarity serve the individual person and their personal fulfilment.

According to the Christian-social perception, the economy is also intended to serve mankind, and every economic order has to measure up accordingly. This also applies to focusing on sustainability to safeguard the vital basis of our existence. EZA believes that the market cannot guarantee this and is convinced that a socio-ecological market economy is needed.

Therefore, EZA embraces the principles of togetherness, partnership, awareness of interdependence, multi-actor community, subsidiarity, proportionality, and transparency, promoting participation on all levels.

EZA is convinced that according to the Social doctrine, we have to speak about **the person** rather than the individual to make it clear that a person does not stand alone, but is and always has been dependent on others. Human beings are social creatures. This is expressed in friendships, family and various forms of life.

EZA considers **subsidiarity** as an important principle namely the (social) general principle of responsibility to be given to the level where the best results can be obtained for the people; the social dimension of it leads to self-organisation of smaller social entities. The larger higher entity supports the lower entity by helping them to help themselves.

People and also families need the freedom to pursue their own development. This is safeguarded by the principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is the opposite of a concentration of power at one central higher level. There is no subsidiarity without democracy. Shaping the democratic order and co-determination and participation in the many different parts of our society are therefore a central concern of Christian-social policy. The principle of subsidiarity is anchored in Article 5 of the Treaty of Lisbon of the European Union.

Proportionality is for EZA the principle of the equilibrium between measures to be taken and the result to be expected.

EZA sees **inclusiveness** as the respect to take everyone on board and to offer the opportunity for everyone to be part of the society and therefore included in the world of work.

¹ Cf: EZA Charta for the Promotion of Equality adopted by the EZA Council on 19 October 2023 in Valencia. In annex

Solidarity is for EZA the social principle of compassionate cohesion for the shared common good and for social justice. Solidarity applies not just within one's own community but on a worldwide scale.

EZA enshrines Work as the human activity involved in social relationships and in the material transformation of the environment. Work means not just paid labour but encompasses all forms of work, including voluntary work or work in relationships such as the family, for example. Gainful work as dependent work has a special importance in our economic order. It must be organised so that people experience work as a meaningful way of earning their living. This explains the special meaning of the social partnership and cooperation in the world of work.

This concept of mankind and society is the basis on which EZA organizes its work. EZA sees itself as part of the Christian-social movement in Europe.

What we do

EZA's work aims to strengthen social dialogue as cornerstone of a participatory civil society as enshrined in the Union's Treaty (Art. 11/2). The social dialogue is an instrument of horizontal subsidiarity, and is intended, with participation from the workers' organisations, to lead toward a socially just and fair society and serve the common good.

Social dialogue

The social dialogue is part of the European social model that makes the EU unique. It provides a forum for employers and employees, for sharing opinions and experience, for negotiations between employers' and workers' representatives and for consistent collective bargaining. Social dialogue enhances the ongoing development of democracy in the workplace, in companies and also in society in Europe. Social dialogue is not the opposite of a market economy. On the contrary, it helps to prevent social conflicts and makes a contribution towards more justice, better productivity and competitiveness.

Promoting social dialogue is a key political aim of the European Union, and part of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU Art. 152-155) as well as the European Pillar of Social Rights. EZA and its education work for strengthening the social dialogue is funded primarily from the EU budget.

In order to defend workers' interests, together with its member organizations, the EZA works in a subsidiary fashion to hold seminars on the wide range of issues that are crucial aspects of social dialogue. This also includes capacity building to enable leaders of the workers' organizations to successfully conduct the social dialogue and make a contribution to defining, implementing and evaluating EU policies.



Annex to the *mission statement*

Adopted by the
Council
ON 19 OCTOBER 2023

EZA Charta for the Promotion of Equality

Gender equality is a principle of the European Union to which we are particularly committed as a European network, which strengthens the European social dialogue through its educational work. 'The promotion of equality between women and men is a task for the Union, in all its activities, required by the Treaties. Gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.'¹ With the following standards for our work, we contribute to the implementation of the right to equal opportunities.

- Both women and men are involved in the planning of our annual educational offer.
- Women and men are equally scheduled as speakers at all seminars.
- Our public presence and seminars have a gender-equitable address in words and pictures.
- Everyone has an equal chance to be heard at the seminars.
- Many of our topics particularly or primarily affect women and we will state this clearly: e.g. discrimination and violence in the workplace, domestic violence, poverty in old age, precarious employment, care work and its impact on professional progress.
- There is an offer for EZA members on how to make seminars gender-equitable.
- The IPEO of the EZA network organizes an annual seminar on the topic of gender equality, and as a network we strive to regularly offer further seminars to promote equality as part of our education programme.
- As EZA members, we fully comply with our preventive and reactive obligations to protect against discrimination in the workplace, as provided for by EU directives.²
- All employees of EZA members are informed about their right to a non-discriminatory workplace and their duty not to violate the prohibitions of discrimination.
- From 2026, the EZA organs will have equal representation.

¹ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 - [IMMC.COM%282020%29152%20final.ENG.xhtml.1_EN_ACT_part1_v11.docx \(europa.eu\)](#)

² General framework directive 2000/78/EC - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0078>, gender directive 2006/54/EC - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0054>, 'Caregiver' directive 2019/1158 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32019L1158>