

*MOBILEurope: Collective bargaining for mobile workers in Europe under COVID19 – cases of
frontier, seasonal and migrant workers*

POLICY PAPER – N. MACEDONIA

The number of foreign workers who come to work in the Republic of N.Macedonia is significantly smaller than the number of our citizens who leave the country to work abroad. However, due to a number of circumstances, such as poor labor, economic, and educational policies, as well as the tendency of our labor force to migrate abroad, there is a labor shortage in some particular industries and for specific jobs. It is becoming more and more likely that Macedonia will have to "import" foreign labor in order to make up for the growing labor deficit.

What is detected?

1. There is a need for appropriate normative regulation of the work related rights for mobile workers,
2. It is necessary to integrate the foregein workers (mobile workers) in the trade unions, but also in the society,
3. It is necessary for mobile workers to be included in the General Collective Agreement for the private sector, and consequently also in all other branch collective agreements.
4. In the absence of the possibility of concluding a new collective agreement for the private sector, it is only reasonable to approach the amendment and addition of the existing one, by introducing certain basic provisions that will refer to the rights of mobile workers,
5. It is necessary for mobile workers to receive a certain education regarding the protection of their rights, to receive the opportunity to be informed and consulted regarding all issues related to their work,
6. It is necessary to work toward developing a culture in which the values of integrity, openness, transparency, cooperation, mutual respect, and cooperative problem-solving will strengthen relationships between employers and employees (mobile workers),



Co-funded by the
European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

7. The complicated procedure for hiring foreign workers, the process of transporting them to the country, providing accommodation, are only part of the challenges that Macedonian employers will face.

Regarding the existence of good practices or examples that can be pointed out, from the conducted focus groups, it was found that most participants are not familiar with such good practices/examples, and those that were pointed out related to the formation of unions, holding regular meetings between the management and the union, mutual counseling and consultation during the entire period of the covid crisis, but also afterwards, the signing of the memoranda of cooperation between the unions in three different countries which actually works and provides protection to seasonal workers and the attempt for full integration in the labor system of catering workers by signing cooperation agreements between unions from different countries.

Recommendations for future improvement:

- Adequate mapping and inclusion of mobile workers in trade union organizations
- Education of mobile (foreign) workers about their rights and obligations as part of the Macedonian labor market
- Compliance with national legal provisions regarding trade union organization, information and consultation;
- Respecting the terms of the collective agreements and making steps to incorporate this category of workers into them;
- Strengthening awareness of the need for greater inclusion of these workers in unions, social dialogue and collective bargaining
- Continuous work on building a mutual relationship of cooperation and inclusion of foreign workers in trade unions that represent the interests of all employees
- Suppression of illegal trafficking of migrants and the use of these people in illegal activities
- Reduction of the gray economy by ensuring legal employment of all employees, both mobile and domestic
- Adoption of appropriate legal amendments / improvements regarding the category of mobile workers
- Adequate application of international directives relating to the rights of mobile workers
- Harmonization of the needs of the labor market with the educational process in the direction of creating appropriate personnel



Co-funded by the
European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



- Advancement of the Macedonian economy.

The probability of an influx of foreign labor into Macedonia is growing, and the country needs to be ready for this possibility. In order to protect the interests of the country, the economy, and the labor market above all else, organized and methodical workplan is required.



Co-funded by the
European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.