

Policy Research Alert

FROM FLASH-IT, A DISSEMINATION PROJECT RELATING EUROPEAN POLICY PRIORITIES TO EU-FUNDED RESEARCH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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Nearly half of Europe's recently created jobs involve 'problematic working conditions'

Low-skill, low-wage sectors offering few opportunities for advancement accounted for 'about half' of new jobs in Europe between 2000 and 2007, an EU-funded research project has found. Legislative changes oriented around public responsibility could promote more favourable and sustainable labour configurations, the research suggests.

Focusing on quality of work and life, the WALQING¹ project investigated policies and conditions in job sectors that have undergone considerable expansion: waste collection, office cleaning, building (construction), mobile elderly care, and catering (in hotels and restaurants).

Given that price competition is expected to continue triggering pressure on employment and working conditions, the researchers urge policymakers to develop approaches that support workers in risk-prone sectors. Arguably the most pressing challenge under current economic circumstances, the consortium concluded, is 'how to avoid policy approaches that give leeway, or even foster or produce, the rise in risk-prone jobs in the first place'.

We are reminded that 'major policy gaps may also be policy-driven'.

WALQING's findings, produced by a consortium representing eleven European countries, are laid out in a series of evidence-based, policy-oriented publications available on the project's website². Among the project's recommendations:

- revise EU legislation on public tendering to support socially responsible procurement,
- provide more public support for collective bargaining practices and
- recognise the pertinence of statutory minimum wages.

Underlining the fact that favourable solutions can be shaped through social partnership, the project's final conference in September emphasised key 'anchors for job quality'. These anchors include smart management and the strengthening of employees' voices.

¹ WALQING - Work and life quality in new and growing jobs

² www.walqing.eu

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