

Green Jobs and just transitions

The fundamental role of the private employment services industry in managing labour market transformations for quality jobs

22 May 2026

Executive Summary

Core Transitions Reshaping Europe's Labour Markets Europe's labour markets are undergoing three major structural transitions:

- **Green transition** — the shift to sustainable, low-carbon, circular economies to meet EU climate neutrality goals by 2050. This requires large-scale deployment of clean technologies, reduced emissions, and protection of biodiversity, while ensuring fairness and inclusion.
- **Digital transition** — the rapid digitalisation of work, including AI adoption. Digitalisation boosts innovation, competitiveness, education, and climate solutions, but also raises questions about responsible work organisation.
- **Demographic transformation** — ageing societies and persistent labour and skills shortages across Europe.

The **World Employment Confederation–Europe** highlights that private employment services are essential actors in managing these transitions.

1. Enabling job-to-job transitions

Private employment services support workers moving:

- between **assignments**,
- between **occupations**,
- between **contract types**,
- and between **economic sectors**, including from high-emission industries to emerging green sectors.

This makes the industry a key driver of **labour mobility** and **smooth restructuring**.

2. Supporting re- and upskilling

The green transition will require massive investment in **green skills**. Private employment services already:

- identify skill needs in real time,
- train workers for emerging green jobs,
- help companies future-proof their workforce.

To maximise impact, PES should be fully integrated into **governmental skills programmes**, including the **European Social Fund+**, with a dedicated focus on green skills.

3. Managing sectoral restructuring

Sectors like the **automotive industry** face profound transformation. PES providers contribute by:

- managing workforce shifts,
- offering career management and outplacement,
- supporting socially responsible restructuring.

We call for a policy framework that enables the private employment services industry to fully contribute to the green and just transition.

1. Modernise regulation by lifting existing unjustified restrictions on the agency work industry.
2. Strengthen public–private cooperation of employment services to make the green transition work for people.
3. Ensure equal access to funding for the private employment services industry.
4. Promote sectoral social dialogue on the green and just transition.

1. The Green and just transition of European economies

- 1.1. EU Commission President von der Leyen has put the green and just transition at the centre of her second mandate as EU Commission President. In her political guidelines of 2024, she underlined that “we must and will stay the course on the goals set out in the European Green Deal. The climate crisis is accelerating at pace. And there is an equally urgent need to decarbonise and industrialise our economy at the same time. We must focus on implementing the existing legal framework for 2030 – in the simplest, fairest and most cost-efficient way. We need a new Clean Industrial Deal for competitive industries and quality jobs in the first 100 days of the mandate.”
- 1.2. The private employment services industry fully supports the EU’s commitment to reach climate neutrality by 2050, as well as the intermediate targets set by the European Green Deal. We believe that our industry and its activities in the fields of employment, labour market transitions and skills, form an important part of reaching a just transition in two ways: 1) as framework condition to achieve the goals, and 2) to mitigate the significant impact of economic transitions on workers.
- 1.3. The just and green transition have featured prominently in the EU Quality Jobs Roadmap and in the plans for a Quality Jobs Act. The green and just transition has a strong industrial, economic policy and environmental policy dimension, but it has an equally important employment and social policy component.
- 1.4. European Employment Strategy and the EU Employment Guidelines rightly put a strong focus on the green transition and on a low carbon intensive economy. The EU aims to create up to 1 million additional jobs by 2030 through the Green Deal Industrial Plan, with potential for 2 million new jobs by 2050. Key areas include renewable energy, energy efficiency, and waste management, with approximately 800,000 workers needing upskilling in the battery sector by 2025. Creating and filling these new jobs is done more efficiently in cooperation with the private employment services industry and its key role in managing labour market transitions to green jobs, upskilling workers for green professions and supporting companies in the economic restructuring to move to green production processes.
- 1.5. The societal megatrend of climate change and the rise of green jobs imply several challenges. The most important one is the need to adapt skilling approaches, to foster skills and labour market transitions and protecting workers, rather than jobs. Skills mismatches must be addressed effectively as not all sectors will face the same challenges and while it is essential to maintain labour mobility, flexibility and employability.
- 1.6. Research in the private employment services industry shows that there are several sectors that are strongly affected, including the energy sector and the automotive industry.¹ To address these sectoral challenges and to manage the green transition in an inclusive way, it is important to focus on human capital development strategies and support the transformation of the workforce, be proactive in managing change, build trust between employers and workers and attract the talent needed and promote a flexible and adaptable labour market and workforce, putting the individual at the centre of the transformation
- 1.7. The private employment services industry not only drives the green transition in Europe but also contributes to related debates at the global level. Both the OECD in its Employment Outlook of 2025 on green jobs and the ILO in the context of the just and green transition debate during the International Labour Conference of 2025 have recognised the role of the private employment services industry in managing and enabling the green transition.
- 1.8. The private employment services industry is supporting the green transition, as also illustrated by a number of case studies recently published by The Adecco Group.² These illustrate that while challenges linked to the green transition are by no means easy to deal with, when addressed properly, they can lead to numerous opportunities for governments, businesses, and individual workers. More generally speaking, smart green policies can, among

¹ The Adecco Group: [Accelerating the race to reskill Europe’s automotive workforce: ACEA and the Adecco Group unveil landmark analysis](#)

² The Adecco Group: [Skills For The Green Economy](#)

other things, lead to better skilled and future proof workforce, functional labour markets with sophisticated educational systems and inclusive social protection systems.

2. Enabling labour market transitions towards green jobs through private employment services

- 2.1. The societal and labour market impact of the green transition can be managed and related risks well managed if labour markets are reformed, labour market flexibility is enhanced, and labour market transitions (between jobs, contracts and sectors) are enabled the private employment services industry.
- 2.2. Also, the OECD underlined that managing a career in the context of the green transition involves adapting to a rapidly evolving labour market where sustainability-focused roles are growing by 8% annually, faster than overall employment. The shift toward a net-zero economy requires a strategic approach to upskilling, leveraging existing transferable skills, and navigating the new "green" job landscape. The private employment services industry plays a key role in this context.
- 2.3. The green transition is fundamentally reshaping career management by transforming existing roles, creating new "green" occupations, and phasing out high-emission sectors. Managing a career in this landscape requires a shift toward a "green mindset" focused on circularity and sustainability, rather than just technical upskilling. Key Career Management Strategies include to identify Transferable Skills: Many "green-driven" jobs require foundational STEM, digital, and "soft" skills like leadership and complex problem-solving that are transferable from traditional roles, leverage Career Guidance Systems: Modern tools like the Energy Transition Careers Compass help individuals map their existing skills to over 100 sustainable energy professions, engage in Lifelong Learning: Participation in vocational education and training (VET) and apprenticeships is crucial, especially for middle-skill workers.
- 2.4. The career management company LHH, part of The AdeccoGroup published in 2024 insights on Engineering in Transition: Sustainable Solutions for an Environmentally Friendly Future, showcasing how career management companies implement alternative paths that need to be taken and how to find suitable employees for forward-thinking projects for the green transition.³
- 2.5. For the private employment services industry to fully play its positive role in just and green transitions, regulation on private employment agencies must be appropriate and unjustified restrictions must be lifted. Appropriate regulation and less restrictive regulation on maximum length of assignments, reasons for use or agency work labour contracts will allow the private employment services industry to manage change effectively, support the labour market integration of workers at risk of losing their jobs.

3. Better cooperation between employment services for the green transition

- 3.1. The green transition will inevitably lead to significant job losses in some sectors and job creation in others. The green transition risks displacing millions of workers in unsustainable roles while demanding new, scarce skills, according to The Adecco Group. Without massive reskilling, 71 million jobs could be lost globally, though green energy could create 18 million net new roles.

³ LHH: [Engineering: Sustainable Paths for a Better Future | LHH](#)

- 3.2. The impact of the green transition to job creation and job destruction must be framed by effective and inclusive labour market policies at the national level. Employment services, both public and private, play an important role in managing job-to-job transitions, enabling skills, training policies, and supporting businesses in economic restructuring linked to the green transition.
- 3.3. To use this role of employment services for the green transition more effectively and to target it on better labour market outcomes for all, the collaboration and cooperation between public and private employment services must be strengthened. Private employment services must be recognised and integrated as partners for public policies on the green transition linked to skills for green jobs, labour market transitions and economic restructuring. Also the EU Network of Public Employment Services managed by the European Commission, with which the World Employment Confederation-Europe is closely collaborating, recently published a strategic paper on public employment services supporting the green transition, which highlights the importance of re- and upskilling of workers and on measuring and mitigating the impact of the green transition on declining sectors.
- 3.4. World Employment Confederation members are strongly convinced of the need for closer cooperation between public and private employment services to manage the green transition in a socially responsible and inclusive way.

4. Re- and upskilling workers in the context of the green transition

- 4.1. Making the just and green transition effective and socially responsible for workers should start with a strong link of the green transition to skills and training policies. The OECD underlined already in 2020 that the transition to a greener economy also requires new skills, both for newly emerging jobs and for existing jobs that are evolving. Without a suitably trained workforce, the green transition will be impossible. There is evidence that the green transition will require a massive re- and upskilling of workers, for example in the automotive industry when moving from fossil fuel to the manufacturing of electric cars, in the manufacturing industry with the rise of green technologies and products. The green transition in the services industry drives the shift toward a low-carbon, sustainable economy by offering advisory, technical, and operational services. Key focus areas include decarbonisation, renewable energy, circular economy practices, energy efficiency, and environmental monitoring, supporting industries to meet sustainability targets and regulatory requirements. The private employment services industry provides qualified staff for all these sectors and economic activities and invests in the re- and upskilling of workers.
- 4.2. Skills development and training in the private employment services industry is based on on-the-job training and learning, company-based training

Travi, the Belgian bipartite training fund for agency workers, offers various initiatives aimed at developing "green skills"—the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes needed to support a sustainable, low-carbon economy. Key aspects of Travi's involvement in green skills include:

- **Training Offerings:** Travi provides tailored training programs for temp agency workers and candidates to build necessary skills for green jobs.
- **Sustainability Focus:** They offer resources and training on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR/MVO) within temporary work agencies, including webinars on creating sustainability action plans. These include energy audit, renewable energy installation, waste management, circular mobility and others.
- **Sectoral Support:** As part of the broader green skills movement in Flanders, Travi helps align worker skills with the increasing demand for sustainability, environmental awareness, and eco-friendly practices in the workforce.
- **Collaboration:** Travi operates within the Flemish labour market context, which emphasizes technical skills (e.g., renewable energy, circular production) and soft skills (e.g., environmental awareness) to support the green transition.

schemes at the agencies which often include a dual learning component and sectoral, bipartite training funds as for example in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Italy.

Sectoral social dialogue for the just and green transition

4.3. The World Employment Confederation-Europe is strongly convinced that sectoral social dialogue and collective bargaining play a central role in managing the labour market implications of the just and green transitions.

4.4. Global, European and national policymakers play a key role in setting the targets and pathway to a low carbon intensive economy, but the management of industrial and labour market change in the context of the green transition is best be done at the sectoral and company level and including a strong collective bargaining dimension. Especially in the context of the key dimensions for the just and green transition, skills and training, labour market transitions and economic restructuring, sectoral social dialogue plays a fundamental role.

Examples of national social dialogue practices for the green transition from WEC-Europe members in one or two text boxes.

4.5. At the European level, the Sectoral Social Partners for temporary agency work have conducted several joint projects and activities that are closely linked to the green transition, including a joint project on capacity building with a focus on skills, Working conditions and social protection, a focus in their current work programme on quality jobs and an exchange on the impact of digitalisation and AI in the context of the green transition.

4.6. The European Commission consequently underlines in its presentation and analysis of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue that the social dialogue on agency work at the European level focuses on several labour market challenges including the implementation of appropriate protection to temporary agency workers, addressing skills and labour shortages and managing the digital and green transitions.⁴ Similarly, the International Labour Organisation underlined in its Guide on Private Employment Services that the sector responds effectively to global labour market challenges such as digitalisation and the green transition.⁵

4.7. WEC-Europe calls for sectoral social partners to be strongly associated and involved in discussions and negotiations on the green and just transition, particularly regarding the management of labour market change, skills and training for the green transition and supporting workers in the economic transformation.

About the World Employment Confederation-Europe

The World Employment Confederation-Europe serves as the voice of the HR services industry at the European level, representing both national federations and workforce solutions companies worldwide. Our diverse membership encompasses a broad spectrum of HR services, including agency work, direct recruitment, career management, Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), and Managed Service Provider (MSP) solutions.

Our mission revolves around securing recognition for the pivotal role played by the HR services industry in fostering well-functioning labour markets and advocating on behalf of our members to enable appropriate regulation. By fostering an environment conducive to sustainable growth of the HR services sector, our ultimate goal is to deliver better labour market outcomes for all.

By bridging the supply and demand gaps in labour markets, creating pathways to employment, enabling agile organisations, balancing flexibility with protection and deploying digital solutions responsibly, the HR services industry plays a central role in addressing labour market challenges and delivering people-centric solutions.

⁴ [Temporary agency work - Sectoral social dialogue - Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#)

⁵ ILO Guide on Private Employment Agencies (2025)