



## Sustainable work in Horizon 2020

A research strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The challenges of global competition and demographic change demonstrate the need for new research and innovation on sustainable work systems and innovative workplaces. Longer and healthier working lives are a key issues for Europe's future prosperity. We need new and efficient means to attract and keep talent and to enable work life participation of every European, including older workers, women and migrants. However, research on "Europe at work" is fragmented and barely visible in the EU's research programme Horizon 2020. As a response, the attached proposal gives an overview and four concrete examples of how sustainable work could be included in the Horizon 2020 Work Programmes of 2018-2020:

- Novel technologies and sustainable work.
- Workplace health strategies for sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Sustainable work and the increasing work force diversity.
- Integrated health and safety concepts for large infrastructure projects and new working environments.

### Who we are

This research proposal has been drafted by the *Advocacy Platform for Sustainable Work*, which includes partners from Swedish universities, the major trade union federations, business organisations and individual corporations together with *PEROSH*, the research network of 12 European Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) institutes ([www.perosh.eu](http://www.perosh.eu)).

### What we ask for

We hope that you share our mission to include research on sustainable work as a resource for health, innovation and growth in Horizon 2020. To achieve this goal, you can help to disseminate this research strategy/proposal to the right persons who are in a position to influence its inclusion in Horizon 2020, such as

1. National government and corresponding agencies for Health, Welfare, Labour, Innovation etc.
2. National Programme Committees and relevant Programme Committees for the different themes  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national\\_contact\\_points.html#nad](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html#nad)
3. Members of the European Parliament
4. Responsible persons of the DGs of EU; RTD, CONNECT, SANTE, EMPL, GROWTH  
[http://ec.europa.eu/about/ds\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/about/ds_en.htm)

### Stay in touch

Visit [www.sustainablework2020.se](http://www.sustainablework2020.se) for the latest updates and upcoming events. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions [maria.albin@ki.se](mailto:maria.albin@ki.se).

Sincerely

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This is a summary, please visit [www.sustainablework2020.se](http://www.sustainablework2020.se) or [www.perosh.eu](http://www.perosh.eu) for more information on this initiative and the full version of the strategy.

### Introduction

Europe is currently searching for a boost of jobs, growth and investment. In order to attract the world's most talented individuals to the EU's labour market, Europe's competitiveness needs to be strengthened by investment in education and learning. At the same time, the inclusiveness of the European labour market and the return on social investment, require improvements to address the major demographic transformations Europe is facing, especially the increase of elderly people and migrants, as well as female labour market participation. Additionally, structural changes also call for a joint venture of flexibility and labour rights within a framework of sustainable employability.

Work and employment must, therefore, be the focus of the European Research Agenda. However, research on "Europe at work" is fragmented and barely visible in the EU's research programme Horizon 2020 – especially regarding the development of sustainable and innovative work systems.

A stronger focus on research, development and innovations for sustainable work will promote sustainable development in a broader context. Sustainable work systems also have a key role for skill development and workplace learning. More generally, concentrating on sustainable work and sustainable employability over the life course is one of many ways to promote an *Innovation Union*.

### Potential Research areas in WP 2018-2020

#### 1. Industrial leadership – future production systems

The new industrial policy signifies the EU's first step towards a new industrial growth model. Investment is clearly needed for the modernisation of traditional industrial sectors as well as healthcare and the emerging service sector. Some recent studies indicate that research and technology-led activity accounts for only 25% of innovation, with the remaining 75% of successful innovation being generated by changing managerial, organisational and work practises at enterprise level. Whilst the paradigm shift in human-technology interaction has the potential to unlock new opportunities, the challenge is to find ways to build the prerequisites for sustainable work into the system e.g. participation of workers in the innovation process.

The aim is to reconcile up-to-date and well performing systems with high engagement and high performance workplaces in the context of Industry4.0, novel technologies and increasing automatization. Research activities should also address methods and practical tools for the sustainability of the work such as *proactive means* and *prevention through design*, developed to address the impact of novel technologies on work content, work processes and the work environment.

#### 2. Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing

Current and past WPs focus on personalized health in a context of public health - using research and findings from the perspective of genetic testing and pharmacological therapy. However, as work constitutes a major part of most Europeans' life, there is a major unutilized potential in exploring the association between working life or occupation and personalised health.

The work environment of the individual is often very complex and difficult to characterize. New technologies have created opportunities for self-monitoring of this complexity using wearable devices that measure heart rate, blood pressure, body posture and movements as well as personal levels of



exposure noise and pollutants. Self-monitoring translated personalized adjustments of work has created an opportunity for companies, and society as a whole, to increase employment opportunity for older workers, for individuals with chronic diseases and for persons with functional impairments.

Activities will focus on innovation actions to support the development of user-friendly devices and software interfaces for monitoring of the environment and the interaction between the environment and the individual and to further investigate possible effects of working conditions on the prognosis of chronic diseases. This will lead to improved employment possibilities for European workers with functional disabilities or chronic diseases as well as faster and safer return to work for workers after severe disease, and safe work conditions for individuals with chronic diseases or functional impairments.

### **3. Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies.**

The ongoing demographic transformation in Europe calls for new strategies of social and work related inclusion. To sustain economic growth, prosperity and social development, it is crucial to increase the employment participation of migrants, older workers and other neglected groups. The demographic change is also creating a new market for new products, new services and also new forms of social relations and means of creating social capital.

There is a need for European and national policy development to support businesses and the public sector to cope with structural change and adapt workplace strategies for inclusive working life for the new citizens of Europe. Matching migrants' skills with growing labour market demands is a win-win mission for Europe as an Innovation Union.

Research activities should include an analysis of working conditions, work environments and skills development in order to contribute to new social innovations and partnership between public sector, civil society and the market. Research projects are expected to contribute to enhancing Europe's resilience and will advance knowledge on specific aspects linked to career and task-shifting among migrant workers. This will facilitate the on-going social transformation of European societies.

### **4. Cross-cutting approach for an integrated EU R&D Strategy**

There is a growing need for various forms of integrative policy and knowledge perspectives with regard to EU research programmes. The EU focus on *Responsible Research and Innovation* (RRI) illuminates the need for cross-cutting issues, integrating gender and ethical dimensions, and ensuring access to research outcomes. Interdisciplinary approaches to sustainable work can be analysed in various occupational contexts and sectors of the labour market. Novel health and safety challenges associated with large complex infrastructure projects need to be tackled in a way that efficiently minimizes health and safety risks of workers and European citizens. To this end, a pro-active safety culture and an integrated health and safety concept needs to be developed and implemented across all contractors, including the supply chain and throughout all stages of the project. The primary aim is to enhance the resilience of key economic players by developing and integrating new health and safety management tools with communication interoperability - for the protection of critical infrastructure and new working environments.

Research activities should include the creation of new and innovative prevention technologies to design safe workplaces already in the planning and development phase. Activities should also include the development and integration of new forms of risk detection, assessment and management. The main goal is to enable the complete prevention of fatal accidents according to the 'Vision Zero' safety culture approach and the promotion of general health and wellbeing among involved workers.