

European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work

Thematic Review Workshop: Future role and competence profile of
labour inspectorates

26-27 June 2019, Vilnius, Lithuania

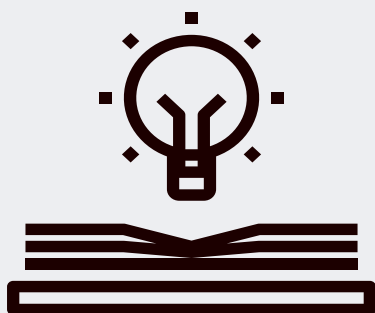
The aim of the workshop was to share knowledge and experiences amongst members of the European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work in relation to human resource management issues, in particular those resulting from adopting a more holistic approach to tackling undeclared work.

The workshop was the first stage in a larger mutual learning process among Platform members and observers and will lead to further opportunities for exchange and collaboration, notably through the development of a toolkit and follow-up visit. The workshop brought together participants from 13 countries, including representatives of labour inspectorates, national ministries and regional administrative agencies, as well as representatives of the International Labour Office and the European Trade Union Confederation. The event was hosted by the State Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Lithuania.

The 1.5-day programme was structured in three parts: 1) identifying the future core functions of an enforcement authority; 2) identifying the competencies and skillsets required by inspectors for a shift towards prevention activities and an appropriate division of labour; and 3) steps towards joining-up these processes in a modern inspectorate.

The following key messages were identified at the workshop:

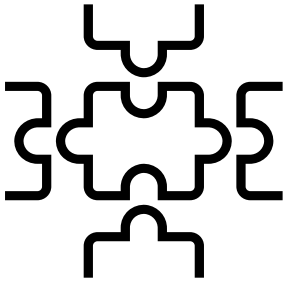
Identifying the future core functions of an enforcement authority



- ▶ Labour inspectorates and other enforcement authorities across Europe are organised in different ways. As such, they have specific needs in shaping their future roles and competencies. However, they face many similar broader challenges, including budgetary constraints, digitalisation and new forms of work.
- ▶ It can be effective for enforcement authorities to work together with other stakeholders, such as social partners and tax authorities, and share a common strategy with them to define and implement preventative measures.
- ▶ New/emerging core functions of enforcement authorities include, among others, data mining and analysis, information, communications and awareness raising, cross-border cooperation, and policy evaluation. These were agreed as key areas in which they need to develop new competencies and/or enhance existing ones, in order to strengthen their efforts to tackle undeclared work.

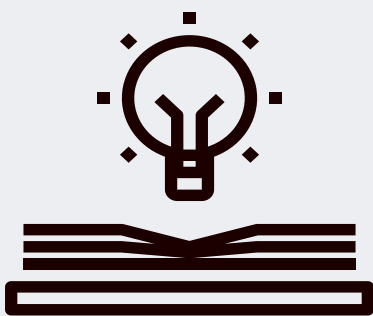


Identifying the competencies and skillsets required by inspectors for a shift towards prevention activities and an appropriate division of labour



- ▶ Enforcement authorities have different requirements when recruiting labour inspectors. In most countries, a university degree is necessary (primarily in law, but also in economics or social sciences). Some enforcement authorities also require a minimum number of years of experience. There are also differences in the specialisation of inspectors, whereby inspectors specialise, for example, in cross border or sectoral inspections.
- ▶ It is essential for labour inspectors to have good communications skills. This enables them to provide information and advice to both employers and employees, and build relationships with other stakeholders and effectively cooperate with specialised units (e.g. data-mining). Persuasion is also an important skill, for instance when conducting preventative campaigns.
- ▶ Inspectors need to have good general IT skills. However these do not need to be very specialised unless they also engage with data mining or risk assessment.
- ▶ For cross-border inspectors - where these are different to general inspectors - language skills are important; in particular for English, but also for neighbouring country languages. Language barriers are some of the biggest challenges when conducting cross-border inspections. To overcome this obstacle, some enforcement authorities have introduced language skills as a mandatory requirement at recruitment stage.
- ▶ Enforcement authorities may need to strengthen their efforts to motivate inspectors to develop new skills (particularly where there is resistance, or on the context of an ageing workforce). Some require inspectors to participate in training through requirements for minimum number of days or proportion of working time that needs to be devoted to job related training every year.

Steps towards joining-up these processes in a modern inspectorate

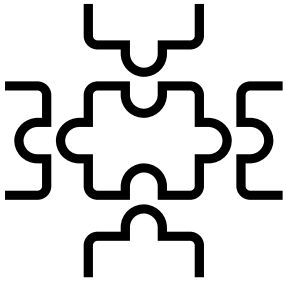


- ▶ It is very important to both attract new employees and retain existing ones. In order to increase attractiveness, organisational culture needs to be clearly formulated and communicated. Enforcement authorities are putting increasing focus on articulating the mission, vision and values of their organisation. In this context, it can be necessary to challenge existing perceptions of inspectorates and underline their new functions.
- ▶ Informal or on-the-job training and knowledge-sharing can sometimes be more effective than official training. Enforcement authorities organise experience-oriented workshops, seminars and other informal gatherings, as well as mentoring schemes. Some countries also conduct annual evaluations and job satisfaction surveys which can be used to develop or revise their human resources (HR) strategies.
- ▶ When developing an HR strategy, authorities could adopt change management techniques, in order to effectively implement innovations in the organisation. Enforcement authorities are realising the need for senior managers to further develop their leadership skills and change management skills. Political support is also crucial to engender change and embed this within the whole organisation.



Recommendations from the workshop

The following key recommendations emerged from the discussions, noting that enforcement authorities have different structures, therefore it is not expected to be a “one-size-fits-all” list:



- ▶ Before developing an HR strategy, define the culture of the organisation, which is expressed in the mission, the vision and the values of the organisation. This will help shape the attitudes of the inspectors and build trust in the organisation.
- ▶ Boost organisational attractiveness by reviewing the organisation’s mission statement. For instance, enforcement authorities could draw parallels between their work and their own organisational values in protecting employees. Modern, flexible working arrangements such as teleworking could also increase attractiveness and diversity.
- ▶ Revise strategic-level KPIs to reflect a combined deterrence and preventative approach.
- ▶ Consider joining-up with external partners to share resources. In some cases, it may be more efficient to cooperate with another authority that has the necessary competence than to develop it within the inspectorate (e.g. risk analysis in tax or social insurance authorities).
- ▶ When relevant, enforcement authorities could consider adopting a division of labour along the lines of their core functions. This could, for instance, include having a specialised unit providing support and advice. This would free-up inspectors’ time. However, this approach could need additional resources, overcoming legal constraints and ensuring staff motivation.
- ▶ A centralised analytical function could also be effective. This would mean having all data in one institution and a need to develop training on how to use the database.

Further information: The information from the workshop will be fed into a Learning Resource Paper and a Practitioner’s Toolkit. The workshop is part of a learning process which will be continued by a Follow-up Visit to one of the participating countries (tbc). The input documents and presentations from the workshop have been uploaded to the Platform’s collaborative workspace.

