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Future of work, work of the future

EUROPEAN FORUM FOR NEW IDEAS

SPRING 2025

15-16.04.2025 r., Hotel Sofitel Warsaw Victoria, Warsaw

The spring edition of EFNI is taking place during Poland's presidency of the Council of the European Union and under the patronage of the Presidency for a reason. The event's timing aligns with the informal meeting of labor ministers in the Employment, Social Policy, Health, and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), which takes place a day earlier. The event is organized by the Lewiatan Confederation in cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy in preparation for EFNI Spring 2025.

The future of work is a key challenge for the entire European Union and its individual member states. On the one hand, there are many shared issues to address, such as the demographic crisis and labor shortages, which put labor migration at the center of attention. On the other hand, ongoing technological transformation—including robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence—is reshaping the labor market and opening new fields of discussion: from future skills and competencies to new regulations, such as platform work, and issues related to the reduction of jobs and the shift towards alternative models, such as a four-day workweek.

We want to discuss all these challenges through social dialogue, which is the best European method for finding solutions, reaching compromises, and effectively implementing labor market strengthening programs. This dialogue must lead to new solutions that balance competitiveness with workers' rights and social security.

Our debates will feature representatives from public administration, business, trade unions, and expert communities, who will address these challenges from different perspectives. Young people will also share their views, going beyond just the perspective of Generation Z.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, APRIL 15th

April 15th, 2025 | 8:00-9:00 |

Morning birds: A conversation about life and work

- Henryka Bochniarz, Chairwoman, General Council, Polish Confederation Lewiatan
- Władysław Frasyński, trade unionist, entrepreneur, politician, democratic opposition activist in communist Poland

April 15th, 2025 | 9:30-10:00 | MAIN STAGE

Welcome and Opening of EFNI Spring 2025

- Prof. Jerzy Buzek, Chairman, EFNI Programme Board
- Henryka Bochniarz, Chairwoman, Main Council, Polish Confederation Lewiatan
- Magdalena Sobkowiak-Czarnecka, Polish Deputy Minister of EU Affairs, Chancellery of the Prime Minister
- Maciej Witucki, President, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 10:00-10:30 | MAIN STAGE

Address by the special guest

- Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

April 15th, 2025 | 10:30-11:30 | MAIN STAGE

The Meaning of Work in a Changing World

The period of Poland's transformation revealed new dimensions of work; it became a value not only in material terms ("Whether you stand or lie down, you're entitled to two thousand" - a saying from the 1970s, when it was also written that "Polish work is sick"), but also in existential, communicative, and communal aspects. Is man a working being, or does humanity function better when free from labor? What is the meaning of work today, and what role does it play after economic crises, the pandemic experience, and in the face of the growing digital economy? What is the value of work—both paid and domestic—at a time when leisure and entrepreneurship are being glorified? How has women's emancipation influenced labor and the job market? Is work (and what kind of work?) an essential component of mental health, or rather a threat to it? The participants of the opening panel of the conference will attempt to answer these and many other questions.

- Prof. Jerzy Hausner, Polish Minister for Labour and Social Policy (2001-2003), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy and Labour (2003-2005)
- Tomasz Markiewka, philosopher, publicist
- Prof. Karolina Wigura, sociologist, Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Liberal Culture, LibMod
- Prof. Ewa Woydyłło-Osiatyńska, author, publicist, addiction therapist

Moderation: Prof. Magdalena Środa, philosopher

April 15th, 2025 | 11:45-12:45 | MAIN STAGE

Trends in the Labour Market: Are Changes in the Business Environment and the Modern Job Market Necessary Conditions for the EU's Accelerating Technological Transformation?

The contemporary labor market is rapidly evolving under the influence of globalization, digitalization, and diverse expectations from both employees and employers. Unfortunately, in the process of implementing and strengthening the technological economy, Asia and the USA appear to be more advanced than Europe. In Poland, the digitalization of companies is not progressing as dynamically as it could. Investment climate, lack of funding, a shortage of specialists, and legal obstacles remain barriers.

Given this, showcasing successful examples of technological transformation among European companies and analyzing how these trends impact the labor market is crucial. Which industries are the current leaders with the greatest growth potential? How can we effectively support investments in technological transformation? What role does public administration play in this process? What digital skills are needed? Should we truly fear that AI and automation will take away our jobs? Is a shortened workweek a realistic prospect for the next decade?

- Li Andersson, MEP, GUE/NGL, Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament (TBC)
- Marina Dubakina, President and Chief of Sustainability, IKEA Retail
- Ivailo Kalfin, Executive Director, Eurofound (TBC)
- Bożena Leśniewska, Vice President of the Management Board for Business Market, Orange Poland
- Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice President of the European Commission for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness (TBC)
- Dariusz Standerski, Polish Deputy Minister of Digital Affairs
- Business representative

Moderator: Mariusz Zielonka, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 11:45-12:45 | SMALL STAGE

Should We Seek a New Model of How Work Is Organised?

With the transformation of the labor market, a key question arises: do traditional work organization models still address future challenges? Stability of employment, employee protection, and effective team-building mechanisms based on diverse experiences and skills are among the key topics. This panel will discuss current trends and future challenges in work organization, aiming to identify specific solutions shaping the labor market of the future.

- Paweł Bechciński, Director of People and Culture, Ikea Polska
- Prof. Ewa Flaszynska, Director, Department of Labor Market, Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy
- Jacek Kowalski, Member of the Board for Human Capital, Orange Polska
- Błażej Mądrzycki, Vice-Chair, All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions
- Marcin Stanecki, Chief Labour Inspector
- Kamila Sotomska, Public Policy Lead, Central & Eastern Europe, Uber
- Liliana Strupp, Polish HR Forum

Moderator: Robert Lisicki, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 12:45-13:45

Lunch

April 15th, 2025 | 13:45-14:45 | MAIN STAGE

Work in the Age of AI—Is It Happening Even Faster Than We Thought?

A technological revolution, comparable to the industrial revolution of the 19th century, is taking place before our eyes. Since the last few years, the development of artificial intelligence, above all in the segment of large-scale language models (LLM), has been taking place at a pace that no one could have predicted a decade ago. Despite the understandable concerns about AI replacing the human workforce and the very negative social impact that such a change may cause, there are indications that AI may not so much compete with humans, but serve as a tool capable of enhancing and complementing their skills. The panellists will discuss the latest trends in the AI segment and predict how these changes may affect the labour market.

- Pawel Gmyrek, Research Department, International Labour Organisation
- Pamela Krzyzkowska, director, Research and Innovation Department, Ministry of Digitalisation
- Inez Okulska, Editor-in-Chief, AI Magazine
- Prof. Piotr Wachowiak, Rector, Warsaw School of Economics
- Representative of Amazon
- Representative of the European Parliament (TBC)

Moderation: Adrian Zwoliński, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 13:45-14:45 | SMALL STAGE

Europe's demographic crisis—implications for the labour market and prospects for the silver economy.

Europe is facing an unprecedented demographic transition that is redefining the labour market and the functioning model of the economy. An ageing population, a shrinking number of people of working age and increasing burdens on pension and healthcare systems pose key challenges for employers and policy makers. In order to maintain the competitiveness of the economy, it is essential to adapt employment policies and implement new solutions to unlock the potential of older workers and underrepresented social groups. Which industries will be most affected by the labour shortage?

What innovative business models can support economic activation of people 50+ and encourage them to stay longer in the labour market? How should labour market policy respond to the changing demographic structure? During the panel, experts and business leaders will discuss strategies to effectively manage these changes and use them as an opportunity to develop the silver economy.

- Prof. Ewa Flaszynska, Director, Labour Market Department, Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
- Paweł Jaroszek, Board Member, Polish Social Insurance Institution - ZUS (TBC)
- Agnieszka Krawczyk-Dąbrowska, psychogerontologist, member of the Polish Gerontological Society
- Prof. Joanna Tyrowicz, member of the Monetary Policy Council, co-founder and board member of the GRAPE think-tank
- Representative of Polish Confederation Lewiatan
- Representative of Warsaw School of Economics
- Representative of Forum HR

Moderation: Ewa Ulicz, Marketing and Product Development Director, IGT Poland

April 15th, 2025 | 15:00-16:30 | MAIN STAGE

Challenges for Work in Europe - Ministers' Panel

How do policymakers responsible for labour rights and social policies in their countries envisage the future of European employment? How far is the European social model coordinated? Will it be difficult to develop common responses to labour market challenges such as automation, an ageing population, changing employment patterns and increasing labour mobility? How can regulation keep up with dynamic changes? Representatives of countries from different parts of Europe will speak on these topics and many more.

- Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk, Minister for Family, Labour and Social Policy, Chairman, Social Dialogue Council
- Yolanda Díaz Pérez, Second Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Labour and Social Economy, Spain (TBC)
- Luka Mesec, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Slovenia (TBC)
- Inga Ruginienė, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania (TBC)

Moderation: Maciej Witucki, President, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 17:00-18:30 | MAIN STAGE

Roundtable - Dialogue as an Effective Change Management Tool

Change is an inevitable part of development - but does it have to mean chaos? The key to its successful implementation is dialogue that connects perspectives, builds trust and unleashes the power of creative solutions. During this panel, experts will share strategies for conducting constructive conversations that translate into optimal management of transformation processes, including on the labour market. How to make dialogue a tool for success? How to

turn diversity of opinions into innovative solutions? Experienced participants in social dialogue at both European and national levels will speak on these issues.

- Maxime Cerutti, Head of Social Affairs, BusinessEurope
- Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk, Minister for Family, Labour and Social Policy, Chairperson, Social Dialogue Council
- Esther Lynch, General Secretary, ETUC (TBC)
- Artur Mazurkiewicz, Chairman of the Board, Lower Silesian Employers
- Piotr Ostrowski, President, All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (TBC)
- Maciej Witucki, President, Confederation of Lewiatan
- One of the EU's labour ministers (TBC)

Moderation: Prof. Jacek Męcina, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 17:00-18:00 | SMALL STAGE

Attempts to strengthen the single market in the age of the technology race and their implications for the labour market

Last year, two high-level institutional reports - authored by Enrico Letta and Mario Draghi - sparked widespread discussion across the continent about the economic future of the EU's twenty-seven.

Taken in an alarmist tone, the analyses boiled down to 'Europeans will get poorer if the EU does not change course'. The consensus was that one of the key elements in stimulating the economy should be strengthening competitiveness, deepening the single market coupled with the further removal of sectoral barriers and mobilising European capital for investment. One aspect of this trend is the Digital Single Market strategy adopted in 2015, thus promoting regulatory coherence in the digital area, but which remains unfinished. How should we act in the reality of a technological race in which Europe is far from being in a leading position at the moment? How would the implementation of the DSM affect the labour market?

Opening remarks: Adam Szłapka, Minister for European Union Affairs, Chancellery of the Prime Minister (TBC)

- Małgorzata Bonikowska, President, Centre for International Relations
- Christophe Carugati, founder of the think-tank Digital Competition, lawyer, economist
- Prof. Tymoteusz Doligalski, AI Lab Intercollegiate Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Platforms, Head of the e-Business Department, Warsaw School of Economics
- Ignacy Świącicki, Head of the Digital Economy Team, Polish Economic Institute
- Representative of the European Parliament (TBC)

Moderation: Aleksandra Musielak, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 15th, 2025 | 19:30-22:30 | MAIN STAGE

Dinner and Networking Evening

The evening will begin with a concert by the music band "Przebiśniegi" („The Snowdrops“)

The group consists of a trio of young artists: Joanna Jewuła, Jan Bąk, and Markus Żamojda. Their style blends elements of several genres, including indie pop, rock, synth-pop, funk, and disco. The band was formed in 2023 and is currently working on its debut album. Interestingly, all members take on vocal duties and often incorporate spoken-word elements into their performances.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16th

April 16th, 2025 | 9:00-10:00 | MAIN STAGE

Generation Z in the Job Market. Ready or Not?

Generation Z is entering the labour market at a time of dynamic technological, social and economic change. How do the young find themselves in this reality? Are flexible forms of employment, remote working and work-life balance priorities for them? To what extent does work define their identity and lifestyle? Many myths have grown up around this generation - can they really be suspected of having a 'laziness gene', or are they looking for meaning and value in work in a different way? What are their biggest concerns and expectations of employers and the state? Do trade unions matter to them? Are they ready for the future, or is the labour market not ready for them? During the panel we will look at these questions, analysing the needs, ambitions and challenges of young people in the labour market.

Prof. Jacek Męcina - introduction and presentation of research results on Generation Z

- Karolina Messyasz, Department of Sociology of Politics and Morality, University of Lodz
- Karolina Olejak, journalist and publicist, Polsat News
- Prof. Joanna Żukowska, head, Department of Entrepreneurship and Business Environment, Warsaw School of Economics

Moderation: Robert Lisicki, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 16th, 2025 | 9:00-10:00 | SMALL STAGE

How can citizens, businesses and the labour market navigate an unstable world?

In the fourth year of a full-scale war in Ukraine, with the Trump administration questioning past alliances and in the eye of the technological race, the world is gripped by uncertainty and structural tensions. What kind of world will emerge from this turning point? What skills will we need in a decade? How do trade wars and other factors affect the European labour market? As the country presiding over the European Union, Poland seems more than the right place to discuss these issues.

- Helene Budliger Artieda, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (TBC)
- Mattias Dahl, Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee, BusinessEurope
- Magdalena Sobkowiak-Czarnecka, Undersecretary of State, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, European Union Affairs Division
- Prof. Mikołaj Pindelski, Department of Management Theory, Warsaw School of Economics

- Representative of DG INTPA, European Commission (TBC)

Moderator: Małgorzata Mroczkowska-Horne, Director General, Lewiatan Confederation

April 16th, 2025 | 10:10-11:10 | MAIN STAGE

Labour Migration—A Remedy for Workforce Shortages?

Without immigration or improved fertility rates, Europe's population could shrink by up to a third by 2100, with far-reaching consequences for the economy and labour market. Faced with a labour shortage, many entrepreneurs are increasingly turning to candidates from third countries. Meanwhile, the Polish migration strategy does not recognise labour immigration as a key tool to counter the demographic crisis, which raises questions about the future of the labour market. How to effectively reconcile economic needs with migration policy and security challenges? Which labour immigration models can support stable development of the Polish economy? What role do employers play in migration processes and integration of foreigners and what changes should they prepare for?

- Prof. Maciej Duszczyk, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Interior and Administration
- Prof. Paweł Kaczmarczyk, Director, Centre for Migration Research, Warsaw University
- Andrzej Kubisiak, Deputy Director, Polish Economic Institute
- Representative of HR Forum (TBC)

Moderation: Nadia Winiarska, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 16th, 2025 | 10:10-11:10 | SMALL STAGE

Qualifications and Skills in the Face of Technological Transformation

In the age of artificial intelligence and automation, is academic education and degrees obtained or rather adaptability key? Technological transformation is redefining the labour market, requiring workers not only to have new competences, but also to be flexible in acquiring them. Which skills will become more valuable? How to develop qualifications to keep up with the changes rather than falling behind? During the panel, experts will discuss reskilling and upskilling strategies and suggest how to effectively combine technological knowledge with soft skills.

- Aleksandra Berg-Koza, Deputy Director, Department of Development Services, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development
- Dominika Bosek-Rak, Department of Management Theory, AI LAB, Warsaw School of Economics
- Nicole Primmer, Deputy Executive Director, Policy and Strategic Engagement, Business, OECD (TBC)

- Prof. Beata Woźniak-Jęchorek, Department of Macroeconomics and Development Research, Poznań University of Economics
- Business Representative

Moderation: Hanna Cichy, Head of the Economic Department, Polityka Insight

April 16th, 2025 | 11:35-12:45 | MAIN STAGE

Labour market from a woman's perspective—looming risk of conservative backlash against their rights?

With the start of the second term of the US president Trump, it has become clear that we are entering a time of regressive standards in the area of gender equality, and perhaps even an anti-woman, conservative counter-revolution. Equality policies are being erased from the pages of American institutions, and private companies are joining the trend by abandoning the principles of the 'Diversity, Equity & Inclusion' approach. In these difficult times, however, we do not want to give in to doubt because, as America's most famous lawyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, used to say, 'a sense of humour is useful to those who seek social change'. Instead of giving in to pessimistic moods, let's balance the new reality by asking the panellists: how can we effectively fight for women's rights today?

- Agata Bielik-Robson, philosopher and publicist
- Małgorzata Fuszara, lawyer, sociologist, co-founder and head of Gender Studies at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw
- Aleksandra Gajewska, Secretary of State, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
- Sylwia Gregorczyk-Abram, lawyer, Free Courts Foundation
- Małgorzata Mroczkowska-Horne, Director General, Polish Confederation Lewiatan
- Beata Stelmach, President of the Management Board, Totalizator Sportowy (TBC)

Moderation: Aleksandra Karasińska, journalist, Director of the RASP Foundation

April 16th, 2025 | 11:35-12:45 | SMALL STAGE

Generations on the Labor Market—Dialogue of Youth

Older generations, who value stability and long-term professional relationships, often base their approach on many years of practice and proven methods of action. On the other hand, younger generations, raised in the era of digitalization, focus on flexibility, work-life balance, and greater integration with the digital world. These differences translate not only into the approach to performing professional duties, but also into forms of communication, clothing and ways of spending free time. They can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts that reduce

the effectiveness of the team, which is why mutual understanding and open dialogue are crucial. How do representatives of Generation Z evaluate the research conducted on them?

- Dominik Kuc, board member of GrowSPACE
- Bartosz Traczyk, student of the Warsaw School of Economics, chairman of the Student Research Group of Finance and Macroeconomics
- Julia Wojciechowska, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Zryw Foundation

Moderator: Prof. Jacek Męcina, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 16th, 2025 | 12:55-13:55 | MAIN STAGE

35 Years of Polish Social Dialogue–Panel of Former Ministers of Labour

A panel discussion devoted to the role of social dialogue in Poland over the last 35 years. Former labour ministers will share their experiences shaping employment policy, employer-trade union relations, and labour market reforms. In the context of current challenges, participants will assess the current situation and present forecasts for the future. What mechanisms have proven to be the best? What modifications are necessary? The panel will provide an opportunity to exchange opinions on the effectiveness of social dialogue institutions and their role in building a stable labour market in Poland.

- Michał Boni, Minister of Labour and Social Policy (1991)
- Prof. Jerzy Hausner, Minister of Labour and Social Policy (2001-2003), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Labour (2003-2005)
- Anna Kalata, Minister of Labour and Social Policy (2005-2007)
- Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, Minister of Labour and Social Policy (2011-2015) (TBC)

Moderator: Henryka Bochniarz, Chairwoman, Main Council, Polish Confederation Lewiatan

April 16th, 2025 | 13:55-14:20 | MAIN STAGE

Wrap-up remarks and official Closing of the Conference

April 16th, 2025 | 14:20-15:20

Lunch