



EU Toolkit



EMECs

European Market Environment in the Construction Sector

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Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| EMECs Recommendations | 3 |
| Emergency related restrictions and access to information | 3 |
| Mobility of posted workers | 7 |
| Social protection of posted workers | 9 |
| Opportunities from digitalisation | 11 |
| Opportunities from innovation of vocational training | 15 |
| EMECs Draft OSH Protocol | 16 |
| ANNEX 1 - Links to the EMECs project's reports | 21 |
| ANNEX 2 - List of COVID-19 protocols used as a source for the EMECs Draft OSH Protocol | 22 |



Introduction

This report was produced as part of the 'European market environment in the construction sector - Enhancing the free movement of posted workers in EU' project (EMECs), co-funded by the European Commission, and addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobility, working conditions and social protection of posted workers in the construction sector.

By means of a set of research and mutual learning activities, the project aims at delivering proposals and recommendations to better support posted workers in case of future pandemics.

The first part of the project provided contextual information by means of six country reports addressing Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Portugal, and Romania.

Following a common questionnaire, the country reports describe measures restricting free movement of workers and production; the actual impact of the pandemic on posting as per available figures and evidences; problems faced by companies involved in posting and by posted workers; evidences of COVID-19 outbreaks in construction sites.

Results were summarised and compared in the EU Report, including as well a paragraph on relevant EU-level measures to coordinate travel restrictions.

Information provided in the report has been supplemented in the project's EU Handbook, exploring responses to the pandemic adopted in the field of health and safety in the construction sector, dissemination of information, social protection for posted workers, as well as pandemic-related changes affecting vocational training in the construction sector.

All topics are explored by combining general information with examples and issues of major interest for posted workers, in turn capable of informing policy recommendations.

Furthermore, a specific phase was devoted to analyse how monitoring and enforcement activities can benefit from new tools, especially ahead of situations, like those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, where checks must be timely, irregularities prevented as much as possible, and physical inspections are more difficult to implement.

To this aim, the project: (i) assessed a set of digital tools capable of improving monitoring of working conditions by public authorities or by companies themselves; and (ii) screened the contents of a sample of job advertisements, to test potential approaches to prevent irregularities in recruitment processes. Partners were also to experiment direct contact with sending undertakings leveraging on Article 9(1)(f) of Directive 2014/67/EU, entailing the possible indication of a contact person for social partners in the preliminary declaration of posting. Unfortunately, despite cooperation with unions in and outside the partnership, this sub-task could not be implemented. Unions confirmed not to have data at their disposal, unless in case they find out posted workers on the construction site and ask who the contact person is.

The reports and interim project's results combine desk and field research activities, including a focus group and 51 interviews, and were discussed together with stakeholders in several public events, including three online workshops and two physical mutual learning seminars in Wiesbaden and Bologna.

A summary of project's findings, illustrating as well some of the most promising practices spotted and analysed by the partnership, can be found in the EMEcs Final report.

This EU Toolkit is meant to sum up knowledge from previous activities to provide recommendations across the covered subjects, and proposes a draft protocol to be used as a basis in case of future similar health emergencies.

Recommendations are described according to a common structure, including a set of target institutions, such as: EU institutions, whenever legislation or coordination of policies is suggested at EU level; EU Member States' policy makers, meaning both at the national and local level as appropriate; enforcement bodies, like labour inspectorates; social partners (trade unions, employers' organisations, social partners' jointly); and paritarian funds, insofar they are responsible for part of wage, vocational training or social protection in some EU countries.

Whereas most recommendations concern action to be implemented in case of future similar emergencies, referring to situations or practices referred in previous project's reports, some of them are meant to fill gaps and problems emerging with the pandemic in order to improve protection of posted workers also in normal times. Indeed, as the pandemic showed, many of its economic and social consequences have exacerbated already existing gaps, whereas acting at the roots of these could prevent situations of distress, and reduce the need to find *ad-hoc* solutions in case of future unexpected shocks to production and workers' mobility.

EMECs Recommendations

Emergency related restrictions and access to information

Adequately and timely involve social partners in the design and roll-out of emergency provisions

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

As described in the country reports, the involvement of social partners appeared to have helped adapting emergency measures to sector-specific needs and features, although with different tokens. In Italy and in Spain, social partners took part in the elaboration of sectoral guidelines; in Portugal they informed the draft thereof by public authorities; in Poland it was an employers' association to propose non-binding recommendations adapting COVID-19 health measures to the construction sector.

At the same time, social partners proved to be a powerful channel of information for companies and workers on safe behaviours to keep.

Description:

Policy-makers shall strive to consult or at least inform social partners of restrictions to be introduced in times of emergency, as long as time constraints allow so.

This would enable not only to adjust some measures and address legitimate concerns, but also to empower adequate dissemination of information.

Depending on the industrial relations' setting, social partners shall also be mandated the implementation of some work-related measures, like the introduction of sector-specific occupational safety and health (OSH) protocols.

Ensure emergency measures are described according to homogeneous standards, and available through a single-entry point

Target:

Member States' policy makers, Enforcement bodies

Rationale:

The interpretation of emergency rules has proved problematic at times. For example, the German country report describes how workers at the Austrian borders were officially required to quarantine despite regulations said the contrary. In most cases, protests against this had been successful only when the quarantine was already over.

Other problems arose whenever decision-making was decentralised, like in Germany and in Italy.

Finally, the EU report and the EU Handbook show that responsibilities for covering costs related to restrictions, for instance for testing and masks, were not always clear.

Description:

In order to ensure the proper rule to be applied, and to help users to compare information from different sources, policy-makers shall stick to common standards and templates as far as possible, whilst referring to a single national portal, promoted as an entry-point for information on emergency related provisions. Information shall be available on the national portal as well as on web-sites of main involved public authorities at least in the language of the country and in English.

For instance, Polish authorities provided for sections on their web-sites in English, Russian and Ukrainian, as detailed in the EU Handbook.

In this framework, the European Labour Authority (ELA) could play a role supporting translation via its translation facility, sharing common or harmonised templates and procedures, and collecting and sharing information on work-related mobility restrictions.

Secure access to information

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers, Enforcement bodies, Social partners

Rationale:

Research conducted for the EU Handbook spotted many examples on information available in languages other than the domestic one, yet rarely in a systematic way. Instead, easy access to information is a key requisite for the actual observance of restrictions and the success of related economic and social measures.

Description:

Public institutions and other relevant bodies shall provide for emergency related information using simple well-known terms and graphic representations, adopting a clear communication style, and using different languages – at least the languages of the countries where the majority of posted workers and migrants come from.

For instance, as documented in the EU Handbook, in some of the countries analysed public authorities, social partners and paritarian funds made available printable posters and videos with key information in different languages with graphic supports.

Information shall accompany OSH measures with related labour and social implications, for instance informing workers about entitlement to compensation in case of quarantine.

Individual support shall complement measures targeting the general public.

For instance, the Spanish and the Polish governments made available telephone free hotlines in order to provide information. In Poland, the hotline was available in English, Ukrainian, and Russian.

Social media dedicated channels should be systematically used in order to reach workers who have less confidence with institutional portals abroad, as it may be the case of posted workers.

Establish cross-border information exchange / working groups**Target:**

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

As described in country reports and in the EU Report, during the pandemic many restrictions applied both to international and domestic travels. Organising mobility was particularly challenging for posted workers and their employers, since they had to face quick changes in mobility restrictions at international, national and local level. This was aggravated by lacks of cooperation at cross-border level, for instance with essential workers being unable to cross the border for being not recognised as such in the country of origin.

Description:

Cross-border working groups should be created to promote quick transfer of information or common action.

An example is the 'Corona Task Force' promoted by the North Rhine-Westphalia State in Germany, as described in the EU Handbook. The task force included representatives of the state of Lower Saxony and of the German Embassies in the Netherlands and Belgium. The aim was to improve mutual sharing of information, synchronize activities and clarify issues of common interest for crisis management.

Ensure access to legal assistance / advice

Target:

Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

Posted workers need legal advice in order to enjoy their rights abroad. Among other findings, interviews implemented for the EU Handbook with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Labour Mobility Initiative confirmed that posted workers were exposed to abuses of legislation in the time of pandemic, meaning also for example higher exposure to COVID-19 infection risk and income uncertainty.

Description:

Policy-makers at national level shall support the establishment of networks meant to provide for free legal assistance to vulnerable persons, especially those not familiar with the legal and judicial system of one's country. For instance, the German Fair Mobility network provides legal advice to posted workers through 11 centres, organises information events and visits construction sites. The organisation, promoted by the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB), has developed into an independent institution, whose role is officially recognised and financially supported by the State following amendments in national legislation regulating posting of workers.

The Polish Migrant Workers Association manages similar services to Polish workers moving or being posted abroad, offering them information and support with regard to their labour and social protection rights, the enforcement thereof, as well as to contacts of public authorities abroad.

Ensure continuity of inspections and on-site visits as far as possible, to provide assistance and advice to workers and employers on construction sites

Target:

Member States' policy makers, Enforcement bodies, Unions, Paritarian funds

Rationale:

As illustrated in the Final report, due to restrictions and safety measures, inspectors could not always adequately monitor construction sites during the first peaks of the pandemic. In some cases, entrance of unionists in construction sites was also denied due to COVID-19, making it difficult to verify the actual working conditions of posted and other construction workers.

Description:

Following health professionals and fragile categories, inspectors shall be made available personal protective equipment in order to keep their work running while minimising

the risk of infection.

Similarly, unionists and members of OSH committees, wearing adequate protections, could share personal protective equipment and information to workers and employers on preventive behaviours in construction sites, possibly also via protocols agreed with health authorities/local institutions.

For instance, the Spanish Paritarian Body for Prevention in Construction (OPPC) and the Paritarian Commission on the Prevention of Health and Safety risk and Recruitment of the Principality of Asturias (COPREVAS) kept of visiting construction sites during the pandemic, addressing doubts, informing workers, and checking the actual presence and use of personal protective equipment.

Mobility of posted workers

Extend validity of A1 forms in times of restrictions to mobility and economic activities

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

Interruptions of works and shortage of materials often meant the prolongation of construction works and, possibly, of posting periods, as testified by interviewees implemented for the country reports.

Description:

The validity of A1 forms shall be extended in case of emergency situations limiting workers' mobility, as done by the National Social Security Institute (INPS) in Italy.

The same shall apply for permits of stay in case of third country workers, whether they are posted or not.

EU authorities shall provide uniform rules or guidance in this respect according to the degree and magnitude of limitations in place.

Consider relaxation of quarantine requirements for posted workers

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

As described in the EU report, the widespread adoption of rules on quarantine upon entry meant the impossibility for posted workers to come back home for short periods,

for them being subject to quarantine both when coming back home, and when returning to work.

Description:

Flexibility shall inspire quarantine requirements for posted workers. For instance, they could be assimilated to cross-border workers, who, instead, could benefit of exceptions from quarantine in certain Member States in reason of their status. Exceptions shall be however limited in reason of the evolution of the pandemic in the concerned countries as well as of the frequency of travels not to disrupt the efficacy of restrictions.

Ensure access to testing and to PPE

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers, Social partners jointly

Rationale:

As described in the EU report, it was not always clear who had to bear costs for COVID-19 related protection measures. For instance, the responsibility for testing cost was not clear, meaning posted workers might end up bearing it. Furthermore, testing requirements to enter a country from abroad were often hard to comply with due to the combination of time limits (48/72 hours before entry) and the need to reach places via bus/train in the absence of sufficient/affordable flight connections.

Description:

Legislation or sector-specific OSH protocols shall clearly indicate the employer as responsible for covering pandemic related OSH costs, from the diverse necessities in terms of transport to reach and leave the construction site, to the necessary personal protective equipment and tests. The State shall provide full reimbursement at subsidised prices in order to avoid excessive costs for companies and to incentivise compliance. Measures like price-caps on masks and tests shall help ensure access to subsidies by companies and workers not established in the country.

Ensure equal treatment of posted workers in case of quarantine

Target:

Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

The EU Handbook reported cases of posted workers fearful to inform employers and authorities about their health status for unclarity over coverage of quarantine costs, if not of losing their job. In Italy, legislation, as interpreted by the National Institute of Social Security (INPS) even precluded access to compensation if quarantine was mandated abroad.

Description:

Whenever benefits are introduced or adjusted to cover periods spent under quarantine or other emergency-related restrictive situations impeding work activities, workers shall be compensated regardless of whether the absence from work is imposed by national or by foreign authorities. Legislation and interpretation thereof shall follow rules included in Regulation EC 883/2004, entailing coverage of social security benefits for posted workers in the sending country.

Ensure posted workers access to vaccines

Target: EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

Despite access to vaccines was considered as universal, as stressed in the EU Handbook, actual conditions often included registration at national health services, which is not necessarily required for posted workers and other citizens staying abroad for short periods

Description:

Ensure that vaccines are considered as emergency services guaranteed via the European Health Insurance Card across EU. EU authorities can support coordination among Member States by providing a platform for data sharing or guidance on standards adopted to keep track of vaccinations, in a way similar to what has been done with the EU Digital COVID Certificate.

Ensure universal access to emergency aids

Target:

Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

The pandemic and related restrictions to economic activities brought a cascade of social impacts, especially for those living in precarious conditions, often blocking citizens in a country other than the one they usually live in.

The EU Handbook reported several initiatives implemented in cooperation or spontaneously by NGOs to ensure actual take-up of aids, including delivery of food and basic materials to those in need.

At the same time, the report spots few cases of acts by local governments restricting access to food aids on the basis of residence.

Description:

Restrictions on the basis of residence for eligibility of food aids in times of emergency shall be avoided, and access to them shall be recognised as a fundamental right for addressing basic human needs, as reinstated by Italian tribunals sanctioning restrictive acts of local governments.

Moreover, in order to ensure actual take-up by those in need, networking with unions, NGOs and migrant associations is key to reach out persons uninformed or not tracked by the public authorities in charge of administering the benefits for various reasons, as it may be the case of posted workers.

Democratize access to social support and mental health services

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

The psychosocial national services are below the needs in several countries and often not targeted to mobile and posted workers for cultural and language obstacles.

However, the EU Report showed how posted workers could be psychologically affected by restrictions because of the inability to come back home and visit their beloved during breaks.

Description:

The extraordinary efforts by urgencies and other health services imposed by the pandemic shall not exclude the social and mental health support services. These services shall be adequately funded and supported in reaching vulnerable groups, like posted workers, also in terms of language skills necessary to communicate in foreign languages (e.g., budget shall be available to avail of translation and interpretation services or

personnel with adequate language skills shall be available within the team of health professionals).

Establish minimum standards in terms of social protection to guarantee income stability in case of temporary interruption of works

Target:

EU institutions

Rationale:

The review of conditions for entitlement, and amount of COVID-19 related benefits in case of interruption of works implemented for the EU Handbook suggests that conditions may significantly differ across EU Member states, triggering inequalities for workers temporarily employed abroad and possibly stuck in case of emergency.

Description:

In light of the discussion ahead in some countries, like in Romania, about the extension of schemes introduced ahead of the pandemic, EU Legislation shall set minimum requirements in terms of access, duration, and amount of the benefits. EU policy-makers shall ban restrictions on posted workers remaining abroad during the period of interruption of works as long as this is justified, for instance in case of health risk or restrictions to cross-border mobility.

Opportunities from digitalisation

Organize a system for cross-border data sharing, with homogenous structure of information

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers, Enforcement bodies

Rationale:

Data availability on posted workers is different from country to country (variables, criteria, access, etc.). Therefore, it is difficult to share and crosscheck them, limiting their use for spotting and monitoring situations at risk.

Description:

Member States shall articulate the different information sources concerning posting, both from the employers and the employees, in a homogeneous way, under guidance of EU institutions such as the ELA.

The implementation of the European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS) shall represent a first step to this aim, making selected social security information available to authorities of other EU countries.

ESSPASS could enable to check whether social security contributions have been regularly paid in the sending country, resembling requirements for having paid or contracted works already in place in some covered countries, like in Italy and in Germany, and currently difficult to check for companies established abroad.

Involve sectoral funds in data sharing

Target:

Member States' policy makers, Paritarian funds

Rationale:

In many countries, sectoral funds are tasked of intermediating a share of (posted) workers' remuneration, like bad weather pay, holiday and thirteen month pay. Yet, gaps were found in the ability to enrol workers in the scheme when comparing data from national preliminary declarations, as stressed in the Italian country report.

Description:

Information from national declarations on posting in the construction sector shall be handed over to sectoral funds whenever they are to intermediate a share of posted workers' remuneration.

This already takes place in Germany between the sectoral fund SOKA-BAU and the Customs authorities, as described in the Discussion paper.

Further data sharing could involve social security data from the A1 form, considering as well possible discrepancies in the figures concerning the two sources highlighted in the EU Report.

Reduce administrative burden in times of pandemic

Target:

Member States' policy makers, Social partners jointly, Paritarian funds

Rationale:

COVID-19 related restrictions significantly affected posting and work on construction sites. Companies had to organise entrance registration and COVID-19 tests, and enable workers to keep the necessary distance during the working process. They also had to comply with the hygiene requirements, like setting up disinfectant dispensers and providing masks for all the workers.

Description:

Many organisational aspects could be simplified thanks to the use of innovative solu-

tions. For instance, workers could register entrances or exits from the construction sites via an app or a personal card connected digitally via a reader, e.g., using the QR code technology. Within the limits set by legislation, similar tokens could include also selected information on health to be communicated to health authorities or used to prevent health risks.

Promote tools ensuring greater transparency in subcontracting chains

Target:

Employers' organisations, Social partners jointly, Paritarian funds

Rationale:

The Discussion paper provides several examples of tools promoting transparency on companies, workers, including their contracts and competences, as well as machineries used in construction sites along the supply chain.

In the case of the Italian platform CHECK, this is actually provided for free by the paritarian bodies, which maintain access to advice companies on health and safety aspects. These tools appear to uphold and satisfy requests of greater quality in construction works, in turn concerning also the quality of contractual arrangements with workers.

Description:

Stakeholders of the construction sector shall offer digital solutions enabling principal contractors and, with different levels of authorization, subcontractors along the supply chain information on companies, activities, and workers involved in the construction site. The tools shall support organisation of construction works, guaranteeing savings and higher efficacy, while helping qualified companies and workers to have their value and competences recognised and adequately valued, promoting a fairer market at national and cross-border level.

Reduce room for online illegal recruitment practices

Target:

EU institutions

Rationale:

Analysis of job advertisements described in the Discussion Paper shows that workers are often recruited without knowing the identity of the employer or of the temporary work agency proposing as a mediator. This is especially the case of advertisements promoted via Facebook groups.

Furthermore, temporary work agencies, whose identity is sometimes hidden as well, seem to occupy a large share of international recruitment requests without significant differences with construction companies in terms of level of experience or type of oc-

cupation required.

Description:

European legislation shall set the boundaries of requirements to run recruitment activities, and contents of job advertisements, considering the publishers as responsible, while working to improve the quality of public match making as to channel there the interest of workers and employers.

It is advised also to implement an ex-post assessment of the actual effects of labour intermediation on the labour market, on fair competition and on workers' protection to decide if to revise in a restrictive way the Directive 2008/104/EC on temporary agency work.

Ensure social partners' access to contact persons of sending undertakings

Target:

EU institutions, Member States' policy makers

Rationale:

The Directive 2014/67/EU includes the possibility for Member States to ask sending undertakings to designate a contact person through whom social partners may seek to engage into collective bargaining within the host country within information to be submitted in the preliminary declaration of posting (Article 9, paragraph 1, letter f).

Beside not being always taken up, attempts made across the project to get details on the contact persons failed, suggesting the provision is not effective.

Description:

Member States shall share selected information on posting with relevant social partners, such as place of posting, number of posted workers, name of sending undertaking and of host undertaking, personal details of the contact person for social partners.

This approach would empower social partners to engage in collective bargaining by identifying cases whereby this may be necessary.

EU guidance shall help moving forward towards a framework fully answering aims set in the Directive 2014/67/EU.

Ensure training/information on-line for construction workers during periods of pandemic restrictions, including digital skills

Target:

Social partners jointly, Paritarian funds

Rationale:

Whereas the project reports, especially the EU Report, stressed information as fundamental to achieve actual adoption of emergency measures, several training measures have been spotted not only to close information gaps, but also to exploit opportunities represented by the forced stoppage of work activities.

Description:

Promote free, short-term online training (e.g., MOOCs) targeting workers and companies in the sector to help them analyse the risk of exposure present in the sector's activities, to promote awareness on preventive measures to avoid contagion, and to provide opportunities of learning during the pandemic. For example, the Conecta Fundación Initiative, set up by the social partners of the construction sector in Spain through the paritarian body Fundación Laboral de la Construcción (FLC), made available several courses online. Learning from this and other initiatives, FLC Asturias recently developed the long-term project 'the Digital Open Classroom', offering short online courses for free, as described in the EU Handbook.

The German Institute Arbeit und Leben even organised online courses in Polish and Spanish to help foreign workers to familiarise with German legislation.

EMECs Draft OSH Protocol

Introduction

The EMECs Draft OSH Protocol was realised by analysing the structure and the contents of OSH protocols introduced to prevent the COVID-19 spread in construction sites in Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Spain¹.

The exercise was meant to identify similarities and divergencies, showing the main concerns and different approaches to tackle the same risk.

For this reason, the text shall not be meant as having a medical value, nor as a ready-to-use tool in case of similar emergencies.

Instead, the Draft Protocol proposes a structured approach to describe goals and measures to adopt in the construction sector to prevent diseases similar to COVID-19. Used as a basis, it shall be integrated and adapted in reason of the specific biological risk to be tackled, up to date medical knowledge and available tools, indications by health authorities, emergency provisions and legislation in place in the country at hand, including in terms of OSH responsibilities and roles.

The protocol is integrated with a section concerning additional guidance for vocational training centres, inspired by recommendations set by FLC Asturias for vocational training centres active in the Principality of Asturias².

Measures to prevent disease in construction sites

Adjust work organisation

Whenever possible, work shall be organised in shifts, and/or different intervals shall be entailed for entry, break, and exit times, as to reduce contact among workers.

As a further possible measure, workers could be divided in self-sufficient, fixed, and easy to recognize groups, not larger than 4 persons as a rule. Larger groups of up to

¹ No sector-specific protocol was adopted in the other country covered by the project, Romania.

² The protocol is available at this link: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/COVID-PROTOCOL-TRAINING-CENTER_ES.pdf.

15 persons shall be permitted only if the technologies used demonstrably require this (e.g., construction methods such as formwork and reinforcement work, tunnel boring machines).

Reduce contact with external providers

External carriers shall remain in their vehicles, follow dedicated paths, and use dedicated toilets.

Access by external providers, whenever necessary, shall be recorded together with names of workers being in contact with them in order to ease contact tracing in case of infection.

Ensure safety distance

Workers shall maintain a safe physical distance to prevent transmission of the disease, as indicated by health authorities. If in place, work stations shall also be at a safe distance. As a general rule, co-presence in closed space shall be reduced.

Ensure safe transport

Safe distance shall be maintained in transport to reach/leave the work place. In this respect, the use of private vehicles shall be favoured.

In case of collective transport, besides using masks, possible measures shall include taking every second seat and/or reducing the capacity of vehicles transporting workers to 2/3.

Hydroalcoholic solutions shall be available on board. The vehicle shall be ventilated and contact surfaces like steer, gearshift and handles cleaned frequently.

Work travels of personnel shall be cancelled, unless strictly necessary.

Ensure safe accommodation

When employer organises the accommodation for workers, appropriate measures shall be observed to prevent contagion.

As a rule, the same living arrangement shall be maintained for the entire period of the stay. If possible, different working groups shall be accommodated in separate accommodations, or at least in separate areas of the same facility. The size and arrangement of spaces should be such to guarantee safe distance. To ensure this, a reduction in normal occupancy and appropriate arrangements or reduction in furniture shall be made, and single occupancy of sleeping rooms shall be guaranteed.

Suitable disinfectants for hand disinfection shall be provided in sufficient quantity, making at least one dispenser available per each room, including for bathroom, toilet, and kitchen.

As a precautionary measure, arrangements must be made for the separate accommodation of sick persons or persons posed under quarantine by health authorities. Workers shall be informed in advance on the location of such facilities.

Ensure compliance with cleaning and general hygiene requirements

All workers shall be informed on the need to observe general hygiene requirements, such as frequent hands cleaning and use of masks, especially whenever it is impossible to maintain safety distance, avoiding sharing working tools.

Employers shall ensure frequent ventilation of environments, daily disinfection of common areas (canteens, toilets, changing rooms, etc.), and frequent cleaning of working tools/machines or contact surfaces.

A dedicated clean space shall be reserved for Personal Protective Equipment.

Cleaning activities can be tracked via a daily/weekly register.

Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) against the virus

Employers shall supply disinfectant solutions for hands, gel dispensers, water, soap, paper towels, garbage bins. These tools shall be available in all areas shared by workers and in entrance areas. Masks, gloves and tests shall be provided for free. The unavailability of masks and other personal protective equipment on the market shall constitute a legitimate reason to interrupt works, provided that companies can prove orders have not been fulfilled.

Disseminate information on the risk

Employers shall inform all workers on measures to tackle the risk of infection, with the help of site managers, cadres, and employees with OSH responsibilities. Information shall avail of posters, leaflets, and entail brief trainings, to be conducted open air or online, with the support of personnel with OSH responsibilities and union representatives.

Manage cases of infections

Workers with symptoms shall be isolated, and employers shall immediately contact health authorities for the possible application of quarantine or other measures, as prescribed by law. Workers shall be aware of the place used for isolation, where water or non-alcoholic beverages shall be available. Workers shall wear a mask on the way to the isolation area and follow a defined path.

In order to identify COVID-19 cases, body temperature shall be measured at the entrance of the construction site. Alternatively, workers shall self-monitor their body temperature.

In any case, health authorities shall be informed if the temperature is higher than 37.5 degrees or if other symptoms are detected.

Health surveillance activities shall prosecute, also considering the role of doctors in identifying fragile subjects and suspect cases, as well as in providing information to workers.

Develop COVID-19 plans and cooperate with workers' representatives

In reason of the size of the construction site, employers shall develop an *ad hoc* plan to address the risk of the virus. Measures shall be discussed, implemented, and periodically verified with the support of workers representatives in place in the construction site or at firm/territorial level.

Additional guidance for vocational training centers

As for vocational training centers, the abovementioned recommendations are integrated and adjusted by the following measures:

- Illustrate information on measures to observe in the training center via informative posters at the entrance of the center, in the classrooms and in common spaces;
- Separate entrance from exit doors from classrooms as far as possible;
- Establish defined paths for moving within the center, with the help of signals to be placed on the walls or on the ground;
- Make a temperature body scanner available at the reception room for measuring temperature upon entrance/if necessary;
- Make sanitising gel, cleaning solutions for surfaces, paper, and bins available in the classrooms, in the teachers' room and close to machines used for practical training;
- Offer free personal protective equipment that could minimise the risk of contagion for trainees and teaching staff. Teachers shall be provided with a kit including sanitising gel, cleaning solutions for surfaces, and paper, that shall be available in classrooms. Students shall receive more working cloths for them to incentivise frequent change and cleaning;
- Ensure breaks at least every one and a half hours to ensure ventilation of spaces;
- Ensure access by one person at time in toilets, changing rooms (preferably to remain closed), and reception room;
- Reduce the use of lifter to cases when this is strictly necessary or limit to one person at time;
- Reduce occupancy of canteens, for instance by allowing occupancy in shifts;

- Backpacks shall not be in contact. In order to ensure that, an *ad hoc* room can be used to store them during lessons, with entrance allowed by one person at time.
- Wear masks inside classrooms and whenever safe distance cannot be observed. Use gloves as to avoid contact with papers, chalks, and other materials that could be shared. Sharing of materials and working tools shall be avoided as far as possible. Whenever this is not possible, they shall be disinfected after each use.

ANNEX 1

Links to the EMEcs project's reports

EMEcs Country report - Germany

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/EMEcs-Germany.pdf>.

EMEcs Country report - Italy

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EMEcs-Italy.pdf>.

EMEcs Country report - Poland

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EMEcs-Poland.pdf>.

EMEcs country report - Portugal

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/EMEcs-Portugal.pdf>.

EMECS Country report - Romania

https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/EMEcs_-Romania.pdf.

EMEcs Country report - Spain

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EMEcs-Spain.pdf>.

EMEcs EU report

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/EMEcs-EU-Report.pdf> .

EMEcs EU Handbook - Protecting posted workers in the construction sector during COVID-19: limits and promising practices

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/EU-Handbook.pdf> .

EMEcs Discussion paper - New tools for monitoring and enforcing working conditions

https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Discussion_Paper.pdf

EMEcs Final report

<https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EMEcs-Final-Report-EN.pdf>

ANNEX 2

List of COVID-19 protocols used as a source for the EMEcs Draft OSH Protocol

Title in original language: SARS-CoV-2-Arbeitsschutzstandard für das Baugewerbe

Country: Germany

Issued by: Organisation for insurance against accidents at work in the construction sector (BG BAU)

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SARS-CoV-2-BG_BAU_DE.pdf

Title in original language: Protocollo condiviso di regolamentazione per il contenimento della diffusione del COVID-19 nei cantieri

Country: Italy

Issued by: Ministry of Infrastructures and Transports, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, associations of municipalities and of provinces (ANCI, UPI), large public contractors in the area of civil infrastructures (ANAS, RFI) sectorial employers' organisations representing large companies and cooperatives (ANCE, Alleanza delle Cooperative), sectorial unions (Feneal UIL, Filca CISL, Fillea CGIL).

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Protocollo240420_IT.pdf

Title in original language: Zbiór zasad bezpieczeństwa w zapobieganiu COVID-19

Country: Poland

Issued by: Employers' association representing large contractors in the construction sector (Porozumienie dla Bezpieczeństwa w Budownictwie)

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Zbior_zasad_COVID_PL.pdf

Title in original language:

Recomendações complementares.

Adaptar os locais de trabalho | Proteger os trabalhadores

Setor de atividade: Construção

Country: Portugal

Issued by: Labour Inspectorate (ACT)

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ACT_RecomendacoesComplementares_PT.pdf

Title in original language: COVID-19: Prevenção e Controlo de Infeção no Setor da Construção Civil

Country: Portugal

Issued by: Directorate-General for Health (DGS)

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/COVID-19-Prevencao-e-Controlo-de-Infecao_PT.pdf

Title in original language: Guía de actuación en materia preventiva por causa del COVID-19 en las obras de construcción

Country: Spain

Issued by: sectorial employers' organisation (CNC), sectorial unions (CCOO construcción y servicios, UGT FICA)

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Guide_social-partners_ES.pdf

Integrated by:

Guía de actuación en materia preventiva por causa del COVID-19 en los centros de trabajo del sector de la construcción

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Guide_Adaptacion-junio2020_ES.pdf

Title in original language: Medidas para el desarrollo de las actividades de formación durante el período de transición hacia la nueva normalidad tras la situación de crisis sanitaria generada por el COVID 19

Country: Spain

Issued by: Local paritarian institution for vocational training in the construction sector (FLC Asturias)

Available at: https://emecs-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/COVID-PROTOCOL-TRAINING-CENTER_ES.pdf

