

Call for tenders: Subcontracting an expert on EU enlargement and social acquis to strengthen trade union capacity in accession countries

This is a call for a subcontractor to provide expertise as part of the implementation of ETUC “Integrated Projects of the European Social Dialogue – supporting implementation of the European social partners joint activities 2025-2026”.

This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on **Friday 4 July** and will be kept online for 73 calendar days. The deadline for submission of bids is **Monday 15 September 2025 (EOD)**.

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1. Background information on the project

This call for tender is launched in the framework of the EU-funded *Integrated Projects of the European Social Dialogue*, which support the capacity-building efforts of EU cross-sectoral Social Partners in promoting and reinforcing EU-level social dialogue. These projects aim to foster constructive dialogue between trade unions and employers across Europe and strengthen national-level engagement with EU social policies.

While the broader initiative includes joint activities of trade unions and employers, the component addressed in this call is coordinated autonomously by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). It focuses specifically on **reinforcing the knowledge and practice of European social dialogue in EU accession countries**, through targeted capacity-building for trade unions in these countries. This strand of activities is focused on the following accession countries: **Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Türkiye**. The core objectives of this strand are to:

- *Strengthen the link between European and national Social Dialogue processes in accession countries;*
- *Provide a forum for trade unions capacity-building and cooperation;*
- *Encourage the identification and understanding of relevant issues that have to be addressed to ensure that the accession countries adhere to the social acquis, in particular with regard to social dialogue and collective bargaining;*

Within this scope, ETUC will undertake the following key actions:

- Organisation of four seminars involving trade unions from Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Türkiye (one seminar per country), with the aim to identify challenges and opportunities for strengthening trade unions' role in accession process and reinforcing social dialogue in mentioned countries. Participants will be supported in developing strategies and initiatives which will be discussed and assessed in one joint final event in Brussels.
- Preparation of four national reports and recommendations, to be developed by an external expert participating in the process. These reports will capture key findings from the seminars, assess alignment of national legal frameworks and labour market practices with the EU acquis, and issue country-specific guidance for further action.

This call for tender relates specifically to the subcontracting of an external expert to contribute to these objectives by developing four comprehensive thematic reports. The expert will also support the preparation and animation of the seminar discussions, and provide analytical and strategic input tailored to each national context.

2. Tasks to be performed by the subcontractor

The subcontractor is required to:

- Assist in the preparation of four national seminars – one each in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Türkiye, by developing the methodology as well as background notes (one for each seminar) that will be used as a framework and basis for discussion for the national seminars. The background notes will be shared with participants two weeks before each seminar. The note could include a series of open questions or action points that will be cornerstones of the seminar agenda.
- Participate in the seminars, which will take place in person over one to one and a half days, and support the moderation of the seminars.
- Prepare four national reports—one for each target country: Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Türkiye. Each report will be based on the background note and the discussions held during the national seminars. The reports will assess the degree of approximation of the laws and labour market features of the accession countries to the EU acquis, in particular with regards to social dialogue and collective bargaining. They will also make specific recommendations depending on the national situation, on the steps needed to proceed towards the full adherence to the EU social acquis. Each report should be approximately 10 pages, written in English.
- Conduct interviews and exchanges with project participants and relevant stakeholders, if needed, to inform the research.
- Participate in the final transnational event in Brussels to help disseminate the research outcomes.

3. Expertise, experience and skills required

The selection procedure will consider the knowledge of the Trade Union environment and previous experience with the identified topics.

The ETUC Project team will monitor the work of the selected expert to ensure the clarity of the tasks and their timely implementation.

The drafting of the background notes and national reports requires sound and proven expertise in the following fields:

- Familiarity with EU social acquis and enlargement-related processes, particularly in relation to social dialogue and collective bargaining;
- Solid background in policy research, particularly in labour market and social policy fields;
- Experience in working with trade unions at both European and national level;

- Understanding of the labour market and social dialogue systems in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Türkiye;
- Experience in working on European level projects is an asset.

Skills required:

- Proven ability to carry out in-depth research on EU issues and understanding links between European and national level;
- Proven research skills, including identifying stakeholders and conducting interviews;
- Capacity to adapt and interact with union members, making the most of the opportunities for exchange provided by the project;
- Comfortable speaking and presenting in front of diverse audiences;
- High proficiency in English: ability to draft documents and make presentations in English;
- Ability to work within specified deadlines and to respect budgetary limits.

4. Time schedule and reporting

Four seminars will be held at different times in the above-mentioned countries between January 2026 and November 2026. The final joint event in Brussels is to be held between December 2026 and March 2027.

The subcontractor is expected to participate in all four project seminars, as well as the final transnational event. They will also be required to regularly attend coordination meetings with the ETUC project team. The exact dates for these activities will be confirmed at a later stage, depending on the availability of participating ETUC affiliates and in consultation with the selected tenderer.

Seminar briefing notes must be delivered two weeks before each seminar, with national reports finalised within one month after each event. The draft background note has to be submitted to ETUC for comments and approval well in advance of each seminar. Once approved, the background note will be circulated among the seminar's participants two weeks before the thematic seminar.

The subcontractor will be asked to perform all the above-mentioned tasks by March 2027.

The timeline above is indicative and can be negotiated with the subcontractor.

5. Payment

The total maximum budget available for the fees of the subcontractor is as follows:

Contract with ETUC	
Main activities and Meetings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting 4 background notes (one for each seminar) and assist in preparing the methodology of the seminars • Participating in and supporting the moderation of the 4 seminars involving trade unions from Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Türkiye (one seminar per country) • Developing 4 national reports and recommendations • Participating in the final joint seminar in Brussels to share main outcomes and recommendations • Liaising with the ETUC project team and national affiliates when necessary 	
Total budget for the Expertise	20.000 € (VAT and all taxes included)

The subcontractor will be remunerated in various instalments (advance and final payment). This amount covers all fees but does not include the travel and subsistence costs for possible physical meetings.

The reports will be duly and clearly accredited to the authors. Ownership of the results and of the written outputs shall be vested in the ETUC, which shall have the right of first publication. The subcontractor may use the results and the written outputs after their publication by the ETUC, quoting the ETUC as contractor and the Integrated Projects of the European Social Dialogue.

6. Selection criteria

Bids will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Quality of the methodology proposed in the offer
- Verifiable expertise, experience and skills, as required and described in part 3 of this call;
- Proven track record of ensuring the quality of written materials produced, both in terms of content and format (i.e. previous publications), in the relevant subjects specified in this call for tenders;
- Financial proposal within the prescribed budget.

7. Form, structure and content of the tender

Tenders must be written in English. They must be signed by the tenderer or his/her duly authorised representative and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. Tenders must be clear and concise and assembled in a coherent fashion.

Since tenderers will be judged on the content of their written bids, they must make it clear that they are able to meet the requirements of the specifications.

All tenders must include at least two sections:

i) Technical proposal

The technical proposal must provide all the information needed for the purpose of awarding the contract, including:

- Specific information covering the technical and professional capacity, as required, in particular:
 - Description of relevant professional experience with emphasis on the specific fields covered by the invitation to tender;
 - Detailed curriculum vitae of tenderer and of the other team members if applicable;
 - A selection of the main works and/or articles published by all the experts involved, in relation to the relevant subjects specified in this tender.
- Specific information concerning the proposed methodology for delivering the tasks listed in part 2 of this call.

ii) Financial proposals

Prices of the financial proposal must be quoted in euros, including if the sub-contractor is based in a country which is not in the euro-area. As far as the tenderers of those countries are concerned, they cannot change the amount of the bid because of the evolution of the exchange rate. The tenderers choose the exchange rate and assume all risks or opportunities relating to the rate fluctuation.

The maximum amount available for these contracts is up to **20.000€** (VAT and all taxes included). The offer should include a breakdown of the NET amount and the corresponding VAT amount.

Prices must be fixed amounts and shall not include travel expenses and daily allowances for the attendance to the seminars and other project events which will be covered by ETUC on the basis of EU rules & thresholds.

Prices shall be fixed and not subject to revision during the performance of the contract.

8. Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money, taking into account the specific objectives, requirements and selection criteria of the tender. The principles of transparency and equal treatment will be respected with a view to avoiding any conflicts of interest.

9. Content and selection of the bids

This call for tenders will be published on the ETUC website on 30 June 2025. Offers must be sent at the latest on 15 September 2025. Offers must be sent to ETUC, in electronic format (by e-mail to amartin@etuc.org), and refer to our “Call for Tenders – EU enlargement and social acquis to strengthen trade union capacity in accession countries”.

As Steering Committee, the ETUC project team will assess the bids received. One member of this committee will confirm the date and time of receipt of each bid. The committee members will sign the report on the bids received, which will list the admissible bids and provide reasons for rejecting bids owing to their failure to comply with the stipulations of the tendering process.

The committee will also evaluate the tenders that have been deemed admissible. An evaluation report and classification of participation requests will be drawn up, dated and signed by all the members of the Steering Committee and kept for future reference.

This report will include:

1. The name and address of the contracting authority, the purpose and value of the contract;
2. The names of any excluded candidates and the reasons for their rejection;
3. The names of candidates selected for consideration and the justification for their selection;
4. The names of candidates put forward and justification of their choice in terms of the selection or award criteria.