



Foundation Forum 2022

key takeaways



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- Post-COVID-19 is a unique opportunity to build back better, but we first need to ensure recovery for all.
- The invasion of Ukraine will be a new driver of change, accelerating the transformations required for the ongoing green and digital transitions in a post-COVID world.
- By the end of 2021, EU labour force participation was at an all-time high, but strong recoveries don't happen on their own. They happen because specific policies are put in place, such as labour retention schemes, wage subsidies or short-term work schemes.
- Structural change requires new skills. The need for new skills is one of, although not the only, biggest challenges of the digital and green transitions. Investment in this area will be vital.
- Following COVID-19, many support measures will be phased out however prolonging this support and putting a greater emphasis on skills can be an effective way, in the long term, to ensure sectors and occupations most at risk stay afloat.
- Worker representatives and employers are best placed to manage workplace transformation and change. The social partners must be at the heart of recovery and resilience efforts.
- The EU needs to build on the European Pillar of Social Rights and its targets and promote social convergence through its work on the minimum wages Directive and the use of the Recovery and Resilience Facility.
- As we emerge from the pandemic, most workers do not wish to return full time to their employer's premises. Remote and hybrid working is here to stay.
- With higher levels of remote work post-COVID-19, we need to be careful that the shift to hybrid working does not deepen gender divides.
- The experience of remote working during COVID-19 revealed how we need to change the way we manage: more coaching, less controlling.
- It's time to think differently about our space: the shift to hybrid working is an invitation to re-imagine our office and urban spaces.
- The move to a fair, carbon-neutral economy requires a combination of money, investment, strategic industrial vision and a capacity to embed the social dimension in this transformation.
- Transitions take time. Long-term commitment is required from policymakers coupled with a shared vision for a carbon-neutral economy among all actors
- The green and just transitions are inextricably linked. For the green and digital transition to work, nobody can be left behind.



- Best practices from successful transitions highlight the importance of dialogue and a range of actors need to be involved in planning and designing future processes, including local authorities, social partners, business, and workers. The role of social dialogue in particular is crucial.
- We need to modernise our social systems in light of technology's impact on employment, especially for the self-employed, new types of work such as platform work and other short-term work.
- The present crises can act as a catalyst for modernising welfare systems. COVID-19 demonstrated how social spending is a form of investment that generates returns by maintaining resilience and ensuring the right conditions for speedy economic recovery.
- Welfare spending is counter-cyclical and essential to navigate economic crises. However, if complemented by environmentally friendly public services that support vulnerable groups, it can also facilitate a successful, socially just green transition.
- New technologies have not led to mass technological unemployment in the past and are unlikely to do so in future. Instead they will help us to concentrate on those tasks and activities where we excel and where we have a comparative advantage over machines such as teamwork, persuasion, analytical thinking.
- Free, open and democratic societies working together tend to do better together. When it comes to re-thinking the future of Europe, we need to:
 - Redefine security – is soft power still enough? The European Union has long been used to projecting its 'soft power' to the rest of the world. After Ukraine, we need to refocus on our collective security.
 - Redefine work – technology is irrevocably changing the nature but also the role of work
 - Redefine expectations – technology is turning science fiction into science fact and Europe's youth has a critical role to play in setting the standards



Eurofound's seventh Foundation Forum set out to explore the theme of Europe's recovery and how, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and the developing crisis in Ukraine, the EU can work to ensure lasting equality, inclusion and social cohesion as it embarks on its path to rebuild a greener, more digital and more resilient Union.

This paper provides the key takeaways from the Foundation Forum 2022 which took place at Dublin Castle on 3 March 2022. The one-day hybrid event brought together over 1,500 EU and national policymakers, social partners and academics. The main topics addressed during the Forum included upward convergence and resilience in the EU, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the future of work, the challenges and opportunities of moving to a green economy, the challenges for social protection systems, as well as rethinking the future of Europe.