

[Press release – COVID-19: MEPs debate how to best protect cross-border and seasonal workers](#)



Following disturbing reports about the precarious situation facing potentially hundreds of thousands of cross-border and seasonal workers in the EU, MEPs will debate with Josip Aladrović, Croatian Minister of Labour and Pension Systems, Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, and Jordi Curell Gotor, Interim Executive Director of the [European Labour Authority](#) how to protect the employment rights, health and safety of these critical workers during the pandemic.

Workers from Romania and other Eastern European member states provide a vital workforce on farms in Germany, France and other member states and ensure food security across Europe. Other workers from e.g. Slovakia provide social and long-term care services for the elderly in Austria and other member states. The European Commission issued [guidelines](#) to ensure that mobile workers within the EU who qualify as critical workers in the fight against COVID-19 can reach their workplace. The agri-food sector is a key sector included in these guidelines, especially regarding seasonal workers.

MEPs will look into their situation to examine if, as reported, there are few or no COVID-19 prevention measures in place and if their rights with respect to working time, overtime and pay are being violated, thereby infringing EU law.

You can watch or catch up with the meeting via [EP Live](#).

Background

The EU has developed a substantial body of legislation regulating different aspects of [mobility](#), including [free movement](#), [posting of workers](#) and [social](#)

[security coordination](#). The European Labour Authority (ELA) ensures that EU rules on labour mobility and social security coordination are enforced in a fair and effective way. On 5 May, Committee Chair [Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová](#) expressed her deep concern about the vulnerable situation of critical workers during the COVID-19 crisis in a [letter to the ELA](#).

In light of the COVID-19 crisis and the additional challenges faced by this vulnerable group of mobile workers, the EP-negotiating team on the [revision of EU legislation on the coordination of social security systems](#) called on the Council and Croatian Presidency to urgently [finalise the file](#) as a top priority in the social area.

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