



Networking Seminar on how the EGF can deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights

*Santiago de Compostela,
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Overall introduction

This report outlines the main findings from the EGF Networking Seminar held on 17th October 2018 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

The purpose of the seminar was to showcase how EGF projects are managed in synergy with other local, regional, national and EU funds in Spain (specifically the region of Galicia), as well to provide a platform for sharing knowledge, best practice, difficulties and solutions between Member States about their national experiences. The seminar started with an introduction by the European Commission, followed by a keynote presentation by Ms Karla de Abreu Moura (EGF) on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Subsequently there was a workshop on how the EGF can deliver on the Pillar in Member States. Afterwards, Ms Victoria Berrocal Ruiz and Mr Guzman Garcia Gonzalez-Posada, from the EGF Managing Authorities in Spain, presented on the impact of EGF projects in Spain, and their complementarity with ESF projects. This was followed by a short summary and conclusions by the European Commission.

In the afternoon, Member State representatives and the EGF team were invited to a plenary reception of the regional authorities of Órdes, where both members from the regional authorities, as well as the EGF GALITEX and EGF Tierras Mineras project teams presented on their experiences. Finally, the attendees had a chance to visit a GALITEX project workshop, to meet some of the beneficiaries of the project, and to ask them questions.

1. Introduction and adoption of the agenda

Ms Fabienne Levy, the Head of Unit F.2 (EGF and Shared Management) at the DG EMPL (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion at the European Commission), welcomed everyone and introduced herself as a new member of the EGF team. The speaker introduced the agenda and encouraged the participants to an open discussion about the EGF, as well as to sharing their knowledge with the other Member States and the EGF team. She then introduced the keynote speaker, Ms Karla De Abreu Moura, from the EGF team at the European Commission.

2. The EU's employment and social policy framework: the European Pillar of Social Rights, by Ms Karla De Abreu Moura, European Commission

Ms De Abreu Moura, from the EGF team at the European Commission, gave the keynote presentation of the Seminar on the European Pillar of Social Rights. The presentation was divided into three parts: explaining what the Pillar of Social Rights is, what the Initiatives at the EU level are, and the contribution of the European Funds to delivering on the Pillar.

Starting with the first topic, the speaker explained that the Pillar is a reference framework for upwards convergence between Member States, which aims to give answers to the problems of the demographic aging of societies, digitalisation and globalisation. The Pillar does not replace any existing social rights but offers a way to include national employment and social policies. The 20 Principles of the Pillar are

structured around three categories: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and adequate and sustainable social protection.

Ms De Abreu Moura explained that although Europe was recovering from the crisis, divergences between countries and areas continued to exist. The speaker also said that digitalisation would radically transform the economy and the workforce over the years, which would also reshape the skills-demand of European employers. Furthermore, globalisation would also continue to transform working lives.

There are many social issues, also in relation to employment, where improvements at the European level are still needed. Gender discrimination and the gender pay gap (current EU average is 16.2%) is one such issue, as well as the pension gap between older women and men (37%), and the gender gap in receiving training and skills at work. The EGF could make a big difference and contribute to achieving the aims of the Pillar, especially in the first category – equal opportunities and access to the labour market.

Putting the Pillar into action requires action from the EU and the Member States: in the updating of EU legislation and stepping up of the enforcement of the aims of the Pillar, funding for the Pillar, the European Semester, supporting social dialogue and the social partners for the successful delivery of the Pillar, as well as including civil society in decision-making and policies to achieve the objectives of the Pillar.

The speaker explained that there are already a number of initiatives at the EU level which seek to support the Pillar. These include initiatives for achieving work-life balance (including paternity, parental and carer's leave, flexible working arrangements, and protection against unfair dismissal and discrimination), transparent and predictable working conditions (new minimum protection rights, effective legal rights and an EU definition of workers with additional forms of employment covered, as well as improved information requirements), access to social protection in six areas (unemployment, sickness, maternity and equivalent paternity, invalidity, and work-related disease or sickness benefits, as well as old age benefits), a new European Labour Authority (facilitating individual and employee access to information on labour rights, as well as cooperation and cross-border dispute settlement between Member States), as well as a new Working Time Directive (to offer guidance to Member States and help the provisioning of flexible working arrangements, and the enforcement of EU minimum standards).

The Pillar's integration into the European Semester is an important step in reaching its aims. The analysis and recommendations in the Semester reflect and promote the principles enshrined in the Pillar by assessing, monitoring and comparing the progress made towards their implementation. Bilateral contracts with Member States will help identify the main country-specific problems in terms of the aims of the Social Pillar, and Country Reports (published in March 2018) aim to reveal the nature and extent of the challenges faced by the different Member States. The European Semester thus provides an appropriate progress measuring and evaluation tool for the goals of the Pillar in strategic areas, while acknowledging the diversity of challenges between the Member States. The two main topics for 2018 are skills challenges and sustainable social safety nets in Europe.

European funds will also be paramount in operationalising the Pillar. The new ESF+ will provide more than €100 billion to support its implementation, investing in people's training, skills, education and employability. 25% of the fund will target social exclusion and those most in need. ESF+ will be closely aligned to the European Semester and its country-specific recommendations. The new ESF+ will include an employment and social innovation strand (focus on employment, skills and social protection), and a health strand (ensuring a high level of health protection).

The EGF will also support the implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights. The EGF Regulation is under revision to help the fund more readily and effectively reach and support those affected by globalisation as well as automation and digitalisation (currently automation or digitalisation are not included). The minimum threshold of the EGF will also be lowered to 250 (from the current 500) to allow more workers to benefit from support. Moreover, the mobilisation process will be simplified. This will allow the EGF to continue working on the facilitation of the general upskilling of workers.

The EGF will also keep a gender equality and equal opportunities focus, giving special attention to women, disabled people and vulnerable groups, to help give them equal access to the labour market. The budget of the EGF for the 2021-2027 period will be almost €1.6 billion.

Ms Karla De Abreu Moura concluded the presentation by reminding the audience of the three main points: first, that the Pillar of Social Rights is a 20-point framework for delivering new and more effective rights for citizens, with three main categories second, that there are many proposed EU-level initiatives to support the implementation of the Pillar; and third, that European funds (including the new ESF+ as well as the EGF) will also continue to contribute, as well as be more closely aligned with the Pillar.

3. Workshop: how can the EGF deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights?

Ms Bistra Valchanova, the EGF Team Leader, introduced the next agenda point – the workshop. Ms Valchanova explained that this year the workshop would centre on the Pillar of Social Rights. The speaker encouraged participants to actively take part in discussions during the workshop, and to share their specific experiences, views and thoughts regarding the European Pillar of Social Rights and its implementation through the EGF.

The subsequent discussions focused around two questions posed by the Commission regarding the Pillar and the EGF:

- 1. Has there been any particular change in the social policy in your country in the last year, following the proclamation of the Pillar of Social Rights? Do you consider that people in your country know about the Pillar?*
- 2. In your view, how are the relevant principles of the Pillar to be reflected/operationalised in future EGF applications? The draft EGF Regulation specifies: "The principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights will act as an overarching guiding framework for the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) and will allow the Union to put the relevant principles into practice for major restructuring events."*

The participants were given time to discuss these questions during the workshop, in eight teams made up of different country representatives, as well as staff from the Commission. All eight teams were asked to write down the main points from their discussions on a poster. At the end of the allocated time for discussions, four teams were chosen at random to present the main points of their discussions.

A speaker from the first team explained that in terms of the first discussion point, the Pillar was not visible enough in most Member States, and that more funds should be allocated to ensure its visibility to citizens. On the other hand, countries and different ministries were already dealing with this problem and finding solutions on how to

popularise the Pillar. The speaker explained that the EGF itself (including new guidelines for the mobilisation of the fund) would help to popularise the Pillar if more beneficiaries were able to take part in the future.

The second team who were asked to present, explained that more EU funding (not just national funding) should be set aside to promote citizen awareness of the EU Pillar and in general impacts of EU social policies. Similarly, citizens should be made more aware of the EGF as well as other social funds and EU instruments. Unfortunately, Member State representatives and employees in the social services did not have the funds to promote the EGF to citizens at large. The speaker explained that Member State policies and activities in EGF packages already contributed to the aims of the Pillar, as well as national programmes, albeit there also being huge differences and discrepancies between the social policies of different countries. In terms of helping EGF beneficiaries the most, an ICT literacy-focus in EGF projects would go a long way in helping people find employment and skills for the future – although different Member States also have different foci on this issue. For example, if the older workers were being laid off who had never finished high school, or had difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy, the initial focus should be on these aspects. ICT training would only have an impact this way later on. The speaker also advised the Commission to share more actively the best practices and policy measures, which were proved effective in this field.

The third presenting team highlighted some similar discussion points, including that a citizen without any particular interest in EU affairs might not have an awareness of the Social Pillar, and that therefore more effort should be put into popularising and marketing it in Member States and by the EU. The speaker said that the EGF was very relevant to the Pillar, and that Member States in general welcomed the new streamlined Regulation, which would come into effect in the post-2020 programming period.

The speaker from the fourth team highlighted that social rights could contribute to narrowing the gap between different Member States, limiting social divergence in varied issues from women's contribution on the labour market, to poverty and literacy rates. As the speaker explained, there were large differences between the Member States in the group, also regarding how to best deal with social problems. Although the Pillar was common knowledge for people involved in the field of social policy, it was not well known amongst the public. Both the EGF and the Pillar should be popularised to the public more in general. The speaker furthermore explained that there were specific reasons for the low involvement of women in the labour market in some Member States. In many cases this was due to having caring roles, general societal unemployment, as well as financial problems (not being able to avoid care for children and elderly relatives if social assistance was not provided by state). In terms of the operationalisation of the Pillar through EGF measures, the speaker highlighted that although older beneficiaries might even be open to learning new skills in ICT, employers were less likely to employ older people because of age discrimination. As the EU has an aging population, this form of discrimination should also be tackled more closely.

Unfortunately, not all of the teams had the chance to present their discussion points. The posters from the other four teams included similar points to those already presented by the teams. In terms of question one, if the Pillar was well known amongst the general public, and that social policy was more widely tied to national policy-making (and that thus changes in social policy would not be tied to the EU, even if brought about by positive and successful EU legislation). The different background and different existing national social policies could make it harder to view

the Pillar as a cohesive EU policy instrument and hide its impact in some Member States – more should be done to popularise it to the layperson.

In terms of the second question, the main issues highlighted on the posters included the following: the EGF should allow tailor-made policies for Member States because of the diversity of social issues (i.e. illiteracy being a bigger barrier to ICT training in some Member States). The EGF should offer new innovative measures to help beneficiaries (for example giving participants their own laptop as an incentive, which would allow them to become computer literate). EGF measures should also target the working poor, fair wages, and finding quality employment for those who have lost their jobs.

4. EGF impact on employment in Spain and complementarity with ESF, by Ms Victoria Berrocal Ruiz and Mr Guzman Garcia Gonzalez-Posada, Managing Authorities in Spain

Ms Berrocal Ruiz started the presentation by providing an overview of the organisation of the Spanish Managing Authority (which works with both EGF and ESF). The main functions include providing guidance to projects, assessing applications, formally passing them on to the Commission, and coordinating between regions, the beneficiaries the Commission, and all the institutions involved in the projects. The team furthermore works on the communication and publication of the final reports, as well as the follow-up of the projects, updating information, and promoting the visibility of the fund.

The Spanish Managing Authority is responsible for EGF projects on the national level, although the regional level (19 regions of Spain) are the first point of contact for new projects. The autonomous regions of Spain have their own employment services who are responsible for managing the projects; the national Managing Authority is responsible for overseeing these.

The EGF project characteristics in Spain are the following: personalised, active employment measures, limited use of incentives, active involvement of enterprises, training adapted to the supply and demand needs of the economy as well as the beneficiaries themselves, and a gender perspective. EGF projects are typically easier to follow up (than the bigger ESF projects) because of the timescale and size.

There have been 23 approved EGF projects in Spain since 2007, with a total budget of €85,442,661 (€49,502,028 EGF contribution), an average execution rate of 80%, and a median cost of €2,02 million (€1,23 million EGF contribution) per project. Of the 19,685 EGF-project eligible workers dismissed overall in these specific cases, 10,341 beneficiaries took part (53.51%) in the EGF measures. 69% were men, and 31% women (also due to the sectors – construction, mining, automobile industry, etc.) with an average cost per beneficiary being €6,468 (€3,765 EGF contribution), a much higher contribution than in ESF projects.

During the crisis, years of 2010 and 2011 Spain made twice as many applications, due to the high number of dismissed workers. In 2015, there was no EGF application from Spain, and in 2016 and 2017 there were three applications per year. The average number of beneficiaries per project has declined in line with the reduction of the minimum EGF threshold – 580 overall, 403 on average since 2010, and 260 on average since 2016. The average Spanish EGF beneficiary is a man who is over 35

years old, has secondary level education, and a lot of years and experience in one company and one sector.

In terms of the economic sectors of the projects, five were in the textile industry, four in the car industry, three in the metal and steel industry, two in the construction industry, and one each in the wood (and cork), ceramics, cement, marble, retail, footwear and hospitality industries. In terms of the locations of the projects, in the different autonomous regions of Spain, nine cases were in Comunidad Valenciana (Valencia) in the east of Spain, three projects in Galicia, three projects in Aragón, two in Catalunya (Catalonia), two in Castilla y León, one in Andalucía, one in País Vasco (Basque Country), and one in Castilla La Mancha. The autonomous regions have independence over health, education and social policy, and have in-depth information about the employment situation in the area, thus the national Managing Authority simply oversee the implementation of the projects but leave specific policies up to the regional authorities.

The added value of EGF projects is the intensive process of integration into the labour market, as they allow regional authorities to work much more closely with the beneficiaries, in smaller groups, with the added flexibility of employing new actions and measures, and tailoring each project to the needs of the specific group. Incentives furthermore help reach beneficiaries who might otherwise not be able to attend training session (i.e. because of travel costs if they live in a rural area). There is a high level of complementarity and coordination with ESF and EGF in the case of Spain, since the national Managing Authority oversees both projects, although regional authorities carry out the measures.

Next, Mr Guzman Garcia Gonzalez-Posada took the stage. The speaker explained that the EGF projects have had a hugely positive impact, as linked to the Social Pillar, including contributing to improving employment rates, providing a quick answer to companies, improving employability in different sectors, providing beneficiaries with certification and qualifications of their skills, improving the careers and career outlooks of participants, improving employment policies at regional and local level, reinforcing the activation of different sectors, compensating beneficiaries for the monetary loss of taking part in training, and having positive effects for family wellbeing and SMEs.

Despite the many positive impacts of the EGF, the speaker explained that there were also some weaknesses, when it comes to EGF projects. First, the administrative procedures of the Commission and the European Parliament make the implementation of the measures slower. Although the EGF Regulation is simple compared to the ESF (and has been simplified for the post-2020 period), it can be difficult to decipher. The Commission does not always deal with the complementarity of funds (for example EGF and ESF) straightforwardly. The speaker questioned why there is no closer cooperation between the funds on the Commission's side.

Furthermore, in terms of the implementation of the project, he pointed out that it is also not always easy to motivate laid-off employees to take part in the EGF measures (for various reasons). Sometimes it is even difficult to reach them in the first place. In terms of the impact evaluation, there are not so many tools available to measure clearly the positive impact of EGF projects, which could make popularising the EGF easier. Visibility is the final weakness – how could the EGF be popularised, especially in the villages where the projects take place? Perhaps this could be improved with technical assistance from the Commission.

Despite the small difficulties with EGF and project implementation (and the room for improvement), the speaker explained that the EGF does a tremendous amount of good, helping people in difficult positions. The active participation of social partners, regional and national governments, as well as the Commission in EGF projects has

been a fantastic experience, which has enabled these parties to work together as key collaborators, and to develop deeper cooperation. The speaker also praised the support of the EGF team at the Commission, hoping that the close cooperation would continue in the future. The connection with the real world, the beneficiaries, and what is happening on the ground in a given region and area, is what makes EGF projects especially special and impactful, for the speaker. The power of EGF projects lies particularly in their size, flexibility and deep focus. The very high degree of satisfaction of beneficiaries is testament to the success of the EGF in Spain.

Overall, 3,842 people meaning 43% of beneficiaries (60% men and 40 % women) have found employment thanks to EGF measures and 10 % are self-employed. Since the beneficiaries were the most disadvantaged members of society in terms of their employment outlook, this is a substantial number. The overall percentage also fails to show that the situation has changed considerably in the last 10 years (the number is an average of how many beneficiaries found employment 12 months after the project, independent of when the project took place, and whether they found employment later).

Mr Gonzalez-Posada concluded his talk by offering a couple of recommendations and discussion points. He asked whether national units could be more proactive (rather than reactive) in terms of identifying EGF projects, and whether it would be possible to identify sectors in dismissals in enterprises in advance, but he guessed that with current (limited) resources this could be difficult. It would be beneficial to have the budget to do more outside the implementations of the projects themselves.

The speaker also declared the importance of more information (in terms of measuring the impact of EGF) to increase the visibility of projects. Instead of receiving extensive audits, the speaker expressed the view that having more indicators and reports about the impact of EGF measures would be more beneficial. It would be difficult to mainstream good policy measures and projects without measuring the impacts and having funding to disseminate and popularise this information.

During the Q&A session, many Member States representatives expressed their agreement with the Spanish representatives, especially regarding the difficulties of reaching possible beneficiaries who have been laid off, especially in light of new data protection laws and regulations, which may make this even harder.

5. Summary and conclusions by the Commission

Ms Fabienne Levy from the European Commission gave some concluding words, after which Mr Ferenc Simon, an EGF Team Member provided a summary of the discussions and debates surrounding the new European Social Pillar and its relation to the EGF, as well as the EGF in Spain. As the speaker explained, the Pillar provides several opportunities for the creation of a more social Europe, but much depends on Member State implementation.

6. Reception at the Plenary Room of the City Council of Órdes with the main authorities and the key agents involved in the project GALITEX

Ms Victoria Berrocal Ruiz from the Spanish Managing Authority introduced the next section of the Networking Seminar, which took place in the City Council of Órdes, a

short bus-ride away from the main venue of the Seminar. The mayor of the City Council of Órdes welcomed the EGF and Member State representatives and talked about the immensely positive effect of the EGF in the region, which had suffered huge unemployment due to the closing of many factories in the area. The Deputy Director of the DG of Economy and Industry of the Xunta de Galicia, as well as the Deputy Director of the DG of Planification and European Funds of Xunta de Galicia also took the floor to express their appreciation of the EGF, as well as the challenges of globalisation, automation, and an aging (rural) population. The last speaker also talked specifically about the difficulties women faced when trying to find employment in the region.

Next, Ms Fabienne Levy from the European Commission took the floor to thank the Spanish EGF stakeholders for organising the session and welcoming everyone to Órdes.

7. Presentation of the EGF GALITEX case

Next, Ms María Coutinho, Deputy Director General of Labor Relations of Xunta de Galicia presented on “Galitex”, the EGF textile-sector case in Galicia. She explained that there has been a long-term decreasing trend of the number of companies active in the so-called “Northern Axis” Coruña – Órdes territory, mostly due to relocation and globalisation. This has led to a huge number of redundancies.

In the municipality of Órdes (a Coruña) with a population of 12,669, a small labour market (only 63% of people are of working age, the average age of a citizen is above 45), which has historically been very dependent on the textile sector, redundancies in this area are having a serious impact on the local economy and employment. 34% of the unemployed (339 out of 979) were employed in the declining textile industry.

The speaker added that the textile sector also primarily employed female workers, for whom it was not always easy to strike a work-life balance in the struggling sector and who have little experience in other sectors or occupations. The geography of the municipality is rural, away from booming urban areas where industry and the service sector are concentrated, which makes finding a job here more difficult.

The speaker explained that the Regional Government of Galicia (Xunta de Galicia) is very grateful for the collaboration of the Spanish National Managing Authority, the support of the social partners, and the EGF, for the successful implementation of the FEAG GALITEX project. The project is providing dismissed workers with active labour market measures, integrated into a coordinated set of personalised services, all aimed at improving their employability.

The total funding for the project approved by a Decision of the European Parliament on March 1, 2018, amounts to €1.2 million (€720,000 EGF financing). The project runs from October 2017 to October 2019. The Xunta manages the project in collaboration with the social partners in the sector. The proposed measures within the scope of the project provide the beneficiaries with job search assistance, a tailor-made re-skilling and training programme, measures that encourage a work-life balance, and entrepreneurial skills.

The speaker explained that the tailor-made and individualised action-plan starts with an initial assessment (step 1), after which the beneficiaries take part in a “setting-up” stage which includes workshops and training (step 2), the third stage of the action plan already includes job-search activities (step 3), and the last stage of the plan is personalised monitoring and closure (step 4).

After step 1, the initial diagnostic and assessment part, the beneficiaries take part in workshops for awareness-raising, including employment activation, skills-accreditation and qualifications, professional competencies, and “return to classrooms” workshops. The available training programmes include training in basic skills, professional training outside the sector, as well as specialised training within the sector, and self-employment training. The beneficiaries also have the chance to get help for relocation support and have personal help and monitoring throughout the project. The job-search guidance (step 3) includes guidance for employee job search activities as well as for self-employment. The project includes incentives for active participation, transport assistance, work-life balance incentive, and incentives for the promotion of self-employment.

Lastly, the speaker talked about the expected results of the project – that the 212 project beneficiaries (70% of the eligible dismissed workers) will improve their employability, and that at least 45% of participants will be able to find employment with their new skills and confidence after the project ends. Approximately €208,000 (18%) from the project funds will be used to financially help unemployed participants in the project.

8. Presentation of the EGF Tierras Mineras case in Castilla y León: complementarity of measures

Mr Miguel Angel Garrido, from Junta de Castilla y León, presented on the mining sector EGF project in Castilla y León “Tierras Mineras”. The objective of the project was to increase the employability of workers made redundant in the mining sector and to invigorate the coal mining sector. The social partners and trade unions in the industry supported the project; furthermore, two other foundations provided help in the form of organising the trainings of the workers. The project included similar activities and guidelines to the GALITEX project (initial assessment, “setting-up” stage, workshops and training, job-search activities, personalised monitoring and closure).

The activities for the unemployed were divided in two measures focused on the EGF-eligible target group, and the non-EGF eligible redundant workers in the sector. More than 15,000 NEETS also registered for the measures through the youth national guarantee. Overall, the project cost €1,670,440 with €965,933.33 financed by the regional authorities of Castilla y León (the project is eligible for €1,002,264 EGF contribution).

From a gender perspective, very few women were involved in the project because of the sector (coal mining industry) being predominantly male, and because the training programmes were tailored to this sector. The regional authorities set up a different programme “Empleo Mujer Castilla y León PEMCYL 2018” (“Jobs for Women Castilla y León”) specifically for unemployed female workers in other sectors. This started in June 2018 and continues today.

The speaker explained that the informal coordination group for the project included trade unions, public, private and social partners, businesses from the region, and regional and national government representatives. A thematic forum has been planned for the 19th and 20th November around revitalising the coal sector. The scope of the project has furthermore included workshops in ICT training and digital skills, digital marketing and ICT assistance for companies to help them develop, as well as advisory assistance and specialised guidance on how people can set up their own SMEs in the region.

There are already 19 projects in the “project bank” through this assistance, including a cooking school, and help is there through innovation and competitiveness training workshops, ICT assistance for companies and individuals, to assist them with starting new ventures and to grow, to economically revitalise the region.

The speaker finished their presentation by talking about Beca Manuel Villanueva, an entrepreneur and the grandson of a miner, who came back to the region to help revitalise it economically. He started a successful craft beer company, and awards grants to young people who want to start a company in the region. Even if projects do not qualify for financial support, mentoring and assistance is provided.

9. Visit to a GALITEX project workshop and meeting GALITEX project beneficiaries

The EGF team and Member States were able to visit three parallel orientation workshops for workers (majority female) who were laid off in the textile industry, as well as ask questions and interact with the workers. The workshops focused on job application and interview strategies, as well as on information on where and how to look for work – adapted to the personal specifications and needs of the participants.

The workshop was organised in collaboration with the local trade unions who supported the EGF project, and the workers (15 on average in each workshop) were positive in attitude, looking forward to gaining more skills, especially in ICT. In one workshop, none of the all-female workshop-participants from the region wished to consider self-employment, or starting their own company, preferring to work rather for a company or organisation – despite this being an option much promoted by the project. This was because, as many of the (older) workers explained, being self-employed, or starting their own company, would require a lot of extra investment in time and energy, and many had other duties to attend to (family, care role). In another workshop, all participants wished to change sector and try themselves in occupations other than the textile industry.

The participants cited ICT and admin roles as possible new avenues of employment that they would be interested in pursuing and were very keen on gaining new qualifications and certifications in this area, or in other fields.

The EGF Networking Seminar ended at 18:00.