



ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT NETWORK MEETING 2025

16-17 October, Kaunas, Lithuania

INVITATION



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TACKLE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT



16-17 October 2025



Vytauto g. 95, Garliava, Kaunas (Lithuania)

Dear members,

We are pleased to invite you to the upcoming 2025 Employment Network Meeting, organised in cooperation with our member **VšĮ Liuteronų diakonija (Lithuanian Lutheran Diaconia)**. The event will take place in Kaunas, Lithuania, on the 16th and 17th of October. This year's meeting will focus on ***Innovative Approaches to Tackle Long-Term Unemployment***.

VšĮ Liuteronų diakonija is a faith-based non-profit organisation dedicated to social support, community empowerment, and inclusion across Lithuania. Rooted in Christian values and social responsibility, the Diaconia provides essential services to vulnerable groups, including people facing long-term unemployment, social exclusion, or health challenges. Among its initiatives is a social enterprise programme that creates job opportunities for individuals with fewer chances on the labour market, promoting skills development and social reintegration. By partnering with local municipalities, churches, and international networks, the organisation fosters dignity, hope, and participation for all.

In recent years, Europe has seen overall high employment rates. Yet, under this surface, long-term unemployment as well as precarious work continue to affect individuals, families, and communities, particularly those in already vulnerable situations. These forms of labour market exclusion are not isolated, but the result of interconnected challenges such as limited educational opportunities, discrimination, the non-take-up of available services, mental and physical health problems, or care responsibilities.



The current situation, shaped by the digital and green transitions, the economic context, and labour market transformations, brings both challenges and opportunities. While these changes can further marginalise vulnerable groups, they might also offer new entry points for upskilling, employment creation, and new pathways toward the labour market and quality employment.

Long-term unemployment can have far-reaching consequences, often leading to isolation, social exclusion, and poverty, not only for individuals but also for their families. Addressing it requires holistic, person-centred, and rights-based approaches that support people in overcoming barriers and promoting lasting labour market integration.

Social service providers are at the heart of this response. Across Europe, they are not only offering psychosocial support, capacity building, and advocacy for inclusive labour market policies, but they are also creating pathways to employment by creating jobs and building local partnerships. By tailoring support to each person's context and capabilities, social services are bridging the gap between exclusion and quality employment.

This network meeting will therefore bring together practitioners and professionals from across our membership to explore innovative strategies to tackle long-term unemployment. Together, we will share experiences, identify barriers, and discuss innovative strategies that promote social inclusion and access to sustainable, quality employment. It will also serve as a platform to strengthen connections within our network, facilitate mutual learning, and discuss local, national, and European perspectives.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Kaunas, Lithuania!

Annika

AGENDA | THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2025

08.45-9.00	Registration
9.00- 9.20	Welcome and introduction <i>Presentation of the agenda</i> <i>Introduction of participants</i> <i>Devotion by Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis</i>
9.20-10.15	Introduction of the host - VšĮ Liuteronų diakonija <i>Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis</i> <i>Head of VšĮ Liuteronų diakonija Mindaugas Kairys</i>
10.15-11.15	Setting the scene: Social Innovation in Employment <i>Social Innovation Unit, DG Employment</i>
11.15-11.35	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.35-12.35	Member's input: VšĮ Liuteronų diakonija (Lithuania): VšĮ Gabrielius <i>Valdas Miliauskas</i> Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (Serbia): Empowering refugees in Serbia <i>Milisav Milinković</i>
12.35-13.30	<i>Lunch break</i>
13.30-16.00	Study visits <i>Visit 1: Crisis Centre at Jurbarko Evangelical Lutheran Parish Diaconia "Jurbarko Sandora"</i> The Crisis Centre operated by Jurbarko Evangelical Lutheran Parish Diaconia "Jurbarko Sandora" provides essential support for individuals and families facing acute social challenges, including domestic violence, homelessness, and sudden crisis situations. Located in the town of Jurbarkas, the centre offers safe shelter, psychological counselling, social services, and practical assistance aimed at restoring dignity and stability. Rooted in Christian compassion and community responsibility, the Centre works closely with local institutions and social partners to help people regain independence and reintegrate into society.

AGENDA | THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2025

16.00-16.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.15-17.30	<i>Visit 2: Support for War Refugees at Jurbarko Evangelical Lutheran Parish Diaconia "Jurbarko Sandora"</i> Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, the Diaconia "Jurbarko Sandora" has been actively engaged in supporting war refugees by providing shelter, humanitarian aid, and psychosocial support. The centre offers a safe and welcoming environment for individuals and families fleeing conflict, helping them navigate local systems, access basic services, and begin rebuilding their lives in Lithuania. In cooperation with local authorities, volunteers, and international partners, "Jurbarko Sandora" fosters social inclusion, community integration, and long-term stability for those displaced by war.
19.00	Dinner <i>Restaurant Kuchmistrai</i>

AGENDA | FRIDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2025

8.45-9.00	Arrival and registration
9.00-9.10	Welcome <i>Eurodiaconia</i>
9.10-10.10	Social Europe Academy Update on latest EU developments by Eurodiaconia • Union of Skills • Anti-Poverty Strategy • Funding update
10.10-10.40	Member's input Diakonie Württemberg (Germany): Future Bonds <i>Holger Fuhrmann</i>
10.40-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.00-11.30	Discussion: Exchange of best practices & learnings Sharing of participants' experiences on lessons learned, best practices, and local collaboration
11.30-13.00	Policy development workshop Please be prepared to discuss the following questions: • What measures are required to promote innovative strategies for addressing long-term unemployment at both the national and EU levels? • What political obstacles do you face in supporting people experiencing long-term unemployment, and how can they be addressed? • How can we ensure innovative projects gain greater visibility and wider attention?
13.00	<i>Light lunch</i>

PRACTICAL INFORMATION



Participation

The meeting is open to anyone working in Diaconia who is part of a network or an organisation that is a member of Eurodiaconia. Those who are likely to find it most interesting are those who work in the broad topic of easing access to employment, especially but not exclusively, for vulnerable groups, as well as organisations interested in developing their work in this area. Our general rule is that a maximum of 2 participants per organisation can join the network meeting.

Registration

Please register [via this link](#) as soon as possible. **If you wish to apply for sponsorship, please register by the 12th of September at the latest.** If you don't apply for sponsorship, the registration deadline is Friday, the 26th of September. However, we cannot guarantee a room at the same hotel for those registering after the 12th.

The Secretariat will confirm participants on a rolling basis and contact you within a few days after your registration.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Eurodiaconia members from Central and Eastern Europe and from minority churches are eligible to apply for financial support via the registration form (ex-post compensation; read carefully [the financial aid guidelines](#)). If you would like to request financial support, we kindly ask you to let us know by registering as soon as possible, but no later than the 12th of September. Our general rule is that a maximum of 2 participants per organisation can join the network meeting, and due to financial restrictions, only 1 of them can be financially supported if eligible. If you have a particular situation, please contact the Secretariat.

The full sponsorship will only be granted if you attend the entire meeting. The Secretariat reserves the right to only reimburse your stay partially, should you not follow the whole programme. In case of conflicting travel schedules and emergencies, please contact the Secretariat.

MEETING VENUE

The meeting will take place in one of our host's facilities, located in at Vytauto g. 95, Garliava, Kaunas.

STUDY VISITS

Please note that transportation to the study visits will be provided by bus. Following the visits, we will have dinner nearby, and then return to the hotel together using the same bus. If you wish to leave the group after the study visits, please be aware that you will need to arrange your own transportation back to Kaunas city centre, as no alternative transport will be provided.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION



TRAVEL

Participants are asked to book their own travel tickets, following confirmation of their participation. Those who are requesting financial support are kindly asked to communicate to the Secretariat the cost of the flight tickets. If it exceeds 350 euros, please hold on from the purchase until getting confirmation from the Secretariat.

ACCOMMODATION

Eurodiaconia will book and pay for the accommodation of participants who ask for and are granted financial support in a hotel in Kaunas close to the venue. Please do not book your own accommodation if you request financial support.

Other (non-sponsored) participants are asked to pay for their own accommodation. The Secretariat pre-booked a few rooms at the same hotel where sponsored participants will stay. Following your registration, the Secretariat will confirm your participation and send you information about the hotel nearby and ask you to confirm if you would like us to reserve a room for you there. You will be asked to pay for your stay at the hotel reception upon check-in.

INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL NETWORK MEETINGS

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful space for dialogue. We recognise that diversity strengthens our work, and we encourage open discussions where diverse perspectives are shared with respect and mutual understanding. We expect all participants to contribute to an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

By participating in our Network Meeting, you agree to comply with [Eurodiaconia's Code of Conduct](#) during this event.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or remarks regarding the content and programme of the network meeting, please reach out to Annika (Annika.sparrer@eurodiaconia.org). For questions regarding logistics and financial support, please contact Konstantina (konstantina.kinikli@eurodiaconia.org).



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and social justice
through action



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