



The European Workplace Innovation Network

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## Reindustrialising Europe Without Losing Sight of Work

As Europe accelerates its reindustrialisation agenda, questions of sovereignty, resilience and ecological transition dominate the debate. Yet behind these ambitions lies a decisive issue: *what kind of work will tomorrow's industry offer?*

In 2025, France's National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions (Anact) launched a Call for Projects designed to explore this very question. EUWIN spoke with **Ségolène Journoud**, Head of International Projects at Anact, about how this initiative connects reindustrialisation, sustainability and workplace innovation.

### **EUWIN: Reindustrialisation is high on the European agenda. Why did Anact decide to approach it through the lens of work?**

**Ségolène Journoud:** Because reindustrialisation is not only an economic or technological challenge—it is fundamentally a work challenge. Across Europe, we see strong momentum around reshoring production and strengthening industrial sovereignty, but industrial jobs still struggle with low attractiveness, physical strain and organisational rigidity.

At Anact (French national agency for the improvement of working conditions), we believe reindustrialisation will only succeed if it leads to better work, not just more production. This perspective is fully aligned with the European vision of Industry 5.0, which places human well-being, sustainability and resilience at the centre of industrial development. Sustainable industry means designing work and organisations that respect people and ecosystems simultaneously.

### **EUWIN: Your Call for Projects is described as a “scientific laboratory”. How does it differ from more traditional innovation or research programmes?**

**Ségolène Journoud:** We wanted to create a space for experimentation and learning, rather than a classic funding scheme focused on predefined solutions. This call supports projects rooted in real work situations, combining field observations, dialogue with employees and managers, and collective reflection.

More broadly, this initiative is part of a framework we launched in 2022 called “Fabrique CTO” (Factory for working conditions and organisation). Its purpose is to identify, support and showcase projects that improve working conditions while enabling organisational innovation. Each year, the Fabrique CTO focuses on specific topics linked to emerging challenges—such as ecological transition, digitalisation or, in this case, reindustrialisation.

Through this framework, Anact provides not only co-financing, but also methodological support, project steering assistance and visibility for the lessons learned. The objective is to help projects generate knowledge that can be shared and reused by other organisations, territories and sectors—very much in the spirit of workplace innovation.

### **EUWIN: What kinds of actors and companies were involved? Was SMEs' participation a priority?**

**Ségolène Journoud:** Yes, very much so. SMEs and mid-sized companies are central to Europe's industrial fabric, yet they often lack the resources to experiment with new organisational models. Supporting them was a clear priority.

The call was open to a wide range of actors: research teams, consulting firms, professional organisations, regional development agencies. What mattered most was their ability to work closely with companies and employees, and to involve social partners.

We were particularly encouraged by the collaborative nature of many projects—bringing together researchers, HR networks, local authorities and worker representatives. This collective approach is essential when dealing with complex transitions that affect both work and production systems.

### **EUWIN: Could you give some examples that illustrate how work and sustainability are addressed together?**

**Ségolène Journoud:** One project focuses on industrial development in Réunion Island, where a CSR observatory is being created to help companies better understand their social and environmental practices in a specific territorial context.

Another project looks at the publishing and printing sector, which faces strong ecological pressures linked to waste and overproduction. By analysing work organisation and involving employees, the project seeks to identify ways to reduce environmental impact while improving skills and working conditions.

We also support a project on the attractiveness of industrial jobs, which is a major challenge across Europe. It explores how job design, skills development and the role of engineers can help make industrial work more appealing, particularly for younger generations.

Across all these projects, work is not treated as a side issue, but as a key lever for sustainable transformation.

### **EUWIN: Social dialogue appears central in many projects. Why is it so important?**

**Ségolène Journoud:** Because sustainable change cannot be imposed from the top down. Employees have deep knowledge of real work situations, and social dialogue allows this knowledge to be integrated into transformation processes.

From a European perspective, this is closely linked to the idea of a just transition. Workplace innovation depends on participation, trust and shared responsibility. When workers are involved early, organisations are better able to anticipate risks—such as workload increases or skill mismatches—and to build solutions that last.

### **EUWIN: What do you hope European readers will take away from this initiative?**

**Ségolène Journoud:** Beyond the projects themselves, which will run until late 2026, a core ambition is to ensure that the lessons learned are shared as widely as possible, particularly with European communities such as EUWIN. The aim is to generate knowledge that goes beyond individual case studies—knowledge that can inspire organisations in France as well as across Europe. The results will be disseminated through both national and European networks, and we could also envisaged organising a dedicated EUWIN webinar later this year to discuss the findings, share experiences and bring together practitioners, researchers and social partners around these issues.

#### **About ANACT :**

*For nearly 50 years, the Agence nationale pour l'amélioration des conditions de travail (Anact) has supported organisations in improving working conditions by acting on work organisation and social relations. Operating under the authority of the French Ministry of Labour, Anact is governed jointly by representatives of the State and the social partners. Its activities focus primarily on small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as associations and public-sector organisations. Anact promotes social dialogue and participatory approaches that bring together management, employees and their representatives to collectively improve work and support organisational change.*

