

PART D - Characteristics and relevance

D.1. Why does your organisation wish to undertake this Action?

Summary of the proposal

- Brief write up of the key points.
- Background and rationale of the proposal.
- Objectives, activities, main outputs, outcomes and impact including indicators of achievement.

Demonstrate evidence of academic added value, promotion of European Union studies and outline how the proposal impacts on the specific subject area of study at an international level. Please outline to what extent the proposal fosters the development of existing and new teaching and debating activities (including new methodologies, tools and technologies), how it demonstrates evidence of academic added value, how it promotes European Union studies at the host institution and gives greater visibility to this field of study at a national level. Please also provide a short overview of the state of play of EU studies in your Faculty/Institution/Country and indicate to what extent your project responds to an identified need to develop this field of study (limit 4000 characters).

State of Play: At one point in time, as many as seven Jean Monnet chairs were held in University College Dublin. Of those, an employment relations scholar held one such chair in the College of Business. Currently however, there are only two such chairs across UCD and none in the College of Business, despite the growing importance of European economic governance.

Challenges: This action focuses on European integration studies and employment relations, namely the way in which social partners are responding to the EU's new economic governance regime (NEG). Until recently, European employment relations were merely shaped by horizontal market integration. Since the Eurozone crisis however, the latter has been complemented by vertical integration effected through the surveillance of member states' economic policies, including employment relations and social policy. The resulting NEG offers contradictory possibilities for social dialogue in Europe.

Objectives: The proposed **Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and Employment Relations** will explore the tensions, challenges and possibilities that the interventionist turn in the EU's NEG poses to employment relations. Are the increased socio-economic and political tensions created by NEG dividing Europeans and threatening the European integration process (Streeck, 2015)? Or will post-crisis Europe be marked by a revival of social dialogue in order to stabilise the EU integration process and to counter the growing Euroscepticism of European workers (Schmidt, 2015)? These questions are relevant for integration studies at a time when even proponents of neo-functionalist European integration theory envisage the following scenario: 'first, the collapse of the euro; then of the EU, and, finally, of democracy in its member states' (Schmitter, 2012: 41). Thus, the action will pursue the following concrete objectives:

1. To deepen our **students' understanding of the EU's new economic governance regime** and its implications for growth, democracy and social dialogue. Our Irish, European and American industrial relations and human resource management students have only limited exposure to EU integration studies, even if employment relations are increasingly affected by European aspects. We will therefore strengthen the European dimension in the curriculum of our joint undergraduate programme in industrial and labour relations with Cornell University and our postgraduate European Masters Programme in Labour Studies programme offered with a consortium of leading universities in the field.
2. To **open up novel analytical approaches that go beyond methodological nationalism** in European employment relations. As we believe in the unity of scientific enquiry and teaching, we are proposing a corresponding research programme and are planning to host an international workshop with leading scholars in the field. This should lead to an edited book and two journal articles on the topic published with leading scholarly publishers in the field.
3. To **involve EU-level industrial relations practitioners and EU officials** in our teaching activities to facilitate students' active learning. We will therefore organise annual fieldtrips to EU institutions and business and union confederations in Brussels for students of 'European Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management' and to the EU agency 'European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions' for students of 'Work and Employment in the European and Global Economy'.

4. To **raise the awareness of the public and industrial relations practitioners** concerning NEG and its workings in different areas of labour politics at national and EU level. Thus, we will organise public lectures in conjunction with the Dublin European Institute on the topic.
5. To **promote European integration studies and employment relations** to a position of eminence in the College of Business that is adequate to the challenges outlined above.

See list of references in annex 1