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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(4.5.2026)

Matters relating to the recognition of and compensation for occupational diseases fall under the competence of the Member States. Nevertheless, with the Commission Recommendation concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases¹ the Commission recommends to the Member States, inter alia, to introduce the European schedule as soon as possible into their national laws, regulations or administrative provisions concerning scientifically recognised occupational diseases liable for compensation and subject to preventive measures. Entry No 408 in the European schedule² refers to COVID-19 caused by work in disease prevention, in health and social care and in domiciliary assistance, or, in a pandemic context, in sectors where there is an outbreak in activities in which a risk of infection has been proven.

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the EU's primary instrument for investments in people. The ESF+ can play a significant role in helping those with Long COVID by supporting vocational rehabilitation, employment reintegration and social inclusion. It can support rehabilitation programmes to help individuals regain capacity for work or workplace adaptations e.g. teleworking and digital skills trainings.

Member States are obliged to programme at least 25% of their ESF+ resources to social inclusion. This can include measures to support individuals struggling with chronic illnesses e.g. mental health services. Member States are responsible for programming and implementation of the ESF+. The Commission can encourage Member States to programme in certain policy priorities if deemed necessary based on national or regional circumstances.

¹ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2025/2609 of 18 December 2025 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202502609

² Added in 2023 by Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/2337 of 28 November 2022 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H2337&qid=1775544661464>