SGI Europe joins European and national partners in Ljubljana to discuss inclusive labour market integration

Brussels/Sofia, 27 October 2026 - On 27 October 2026, SGI Europe participated in the national conference "*An Inclusive Labour Market: The Bulgarian Perspective*", organized in Sofia by CITUB, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria, and Caritas Sofia within the EU-funded LABOUR-INT III project.

The conference brought together EU and national-level social partners, public authorities, employment services, international organizations and civil society to discuss the labour market integration of refugees and other third-country nationals. The event opened with contributions from Giulio Romani, Confederal Secretary of ETUC; Daniela Aleksieva, Vice-President of CITUB; and Tsvetomir Dumanov, Executive Director of Caritas Sofia.

As project coordinator, SGI Europe presented the background, objectives and multi-stakeholder approach of LABOUR-INT III, emphasizing cooperation between employers, trade unions, public employment services and civil-society organizations. The intervention highlighted barriers such as language, recognition of skills and qualifications, access to essential services and the need for fair working conditions.

ETUC presented the pilot actions and main results achieved across the participating countries, while CITUB and Caritas Sofia reported on the Bulgarian pilot action. Activities included Bulgarian-language courses, training in digital skills and vocational qualifications, information on labour and social-security rights, individual guidance and employment support. According to CITUB, 544 people participated in training activities under the project. Training reached people from Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan and Palestine and was organized in Sofia, Burgas, Varna and Ruse. CITUB also reported that ten women who completed vocational training in manicure and nail art subsequently found employment in the field. These results illustrate how practical skills development and information on workers' rights can be combined to support access to employment. Discussions also examined the potential of the refugee workforce, new challenges in the Bulgarian labour market and opportunities for inclusive employment, with contributions from UNHCR, IOM and the Bulgarian Employment Agency. CITUB stressed the role of trade unions in informing and assisting migrant workers and protecting their rights at work.

The conference provided an opportunity to share the Bulgarian experience with national and European stakeholders. As LABOUR-INT III continues into 2027, SGI Europe remains committed to strengthening cooperation and promoting fair, inclusive and sustainable labour markets across Europe.

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