

Inside the Agency Work Industry

The voice for labour choice

Ciett represents and promotes the interests of Agency Work (AW) worldwide. It brings together 40 national Federations and unites six of the largest multinational staffing companies as well as tens of thousands of SMEs. Ciett members consist of private companies operating in the HR fields of AW, permanent recruitment, interim management, executive search, outplacement and training. Through their network of 170,000 branches, with a staff of 819,000 people, Ciett members employ 9.9 million workers (full time equivalent) on a daily basis.

Ciett is a unique platform to develop a constructive dialogue, address relevant issues and influence political agendas. Ciett engages with key stakeholders on behalf of the industry to discuss appropriate legal solutions, present the industry's positions and to participate in any initiatives that aim to create the most suitable and fair legal environment for the industry to operate in.

The aim of the organisation is to uphold the sustainable development of the industry and to contribute to the growth of the economies in which its members operate. In practice, Ciett wants to shape a more favourable environment, especially by working to ensure appropriate regulation of the sector. The organisation also puts a lot of effort into improving the understanding of the reality of agency work, by showcasing the industry's positive contribution to the labour market, including freedom of choice, and promoting its quality standards.

About the Private Employment Agency industry

Agency work is a transparent and 'triangular' form of employment which involves the worker, the user company and the agency. The agency employs the worker and makes him available to the user company. The worker executes the assignment under the supervision of the user company. The AW industry, as an intermediate actor, matches the demand and supply in the labour market, which is very important in the context of a globalised and competitive economy. As a result, the sector is growing and regulated through a mix of legislation, collective labour agreements and self regulation.

AW as a desirable form of employment

This form of employment increases labour market participation and diversity by helping workers to enter and remain in the labour market. In addition, it has many advantages for employees over traditional full-time work. It provides them with the opportunity to develop new skills, expand their professional network and explore different industries and companies. AW industry enhances the workers employability through various job assignments and vocational training. This flexible employment option is also gaining in popularity as a way to achieve a better work-life balance and as a solution to personal constraints.



AW industry's contribution to the economy

The AW industry not only helps to create jobs that they would otherwise not have existed, but it also helps to maintain permanent jobs, by reinforcing companies' competitiveness. To achieve this, AW provides businesses with more flexible form of employment, which is more suited to seasonal activity fluctuations and economic cycles. The industry also offers a number of HR-related services that can be outsourced by companies, enabling them to be more focused on their core activities. AW plays an important role in dealing with companies' skills shortages.

The AW industry is an engine for job creation and economic growth that leads to the reduction of both frictional and long-term unemployment. It matches supply and demand in the labour market and facilitates transitions and transformations. In this respect, the AW industry also promotes a demand-driven approach to work migration policies and promotes flexible forms of employment to support work mobility and fight against undeclared work.

Key milestones:

- 1967** Ciett was founded in Paris (France)
- 1992** Ciett urged the European Commission to file a complaint against Italy, Spain and Germany after which these countries gradually liberalised their agency work regulations: Spain (1994), Italy (1997+ Biaggi amendment 2003), Germany (1992-1997, 2004 Hartz reforms). As an aftermath, several other EU countries legally recognised Agency Work: Greece (1999), Finland (1993), Sweden (1993) and The Netherlands (1998 and further liberalisation in 2003)
- 1997** Ciett managed to reverse the ILO official position regarding the private employment agency industry: from strict prohibition (Convention n°96) to formal recognition (Convention n°181)
- 2000** Ciett initiated and published a strategic report carried out by McKinsey on the Agency Work industry's potential contribution to the EU employment objectives
- 2003** The Task Force reviewing the achievement of the European Lisbon Agenda (Kok Report's "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs - Creating more employment in Europe") highlighted that "Temporary work agencies should have their place in a modern labour market as new intermediaries that can support flexibility and mobility of firms and workers, while offering security for workers.[...] Removing obstacles to temporary agency work could significantly support job opportunities and job matching."
- 2004** Joel Biller, senior vice president of special projects for Manpower Inc., elected as Ciett President

Ciett has set up a permanent secretariat in Belgium to promote the interests of the agency work industry
- 2005** Mexico and the Czech Republic joined Ciett as members
- 2006** Ciett has been legally established as a non-profit making association with regard to Belgian law



Hungary, FYR of Macedonia and Slovakia joined Ciett as members

Ciett adopted a new Code of Conduct, which expresses the shared values of all Ciett members.

2007

Estonia and Bulgaria joined Ciett as members

Eurociett, the European branch of Ciett, published a strategic report entitled "More work opportunities for more people"

Ciett held its Annual conference in Dublin (Ireland) from May 16th to 18th.

2008

Turkey joined Ciett as a new member

Olympia Flexgroup joined Ciett as a new member

Ciett held its annual conference in San Diego (USA) from October 22nd to 25th

2009

Australia, Colombia and Macedonia join Ciett as new members

Ciett held its annual conference in Lisbon (Portugal) from May 27th to 29th

