



A social turn for Europe

Declaration of PES Employment and Social Affairs Ministers - 22 October 2017 - Luxembourg

Europe has to take a social turn to regain the confidence of its citizens. We made it clear already on 15 July 2016 with our declaration “After the UK referendum: a call for a more Social Europe”. We want to **strengthen our social model, reduce inequalities and poverty, guarantee high social standards and strong collective bargaining**. This is why we called on the Commission to present an ambitious European Pillar of Social Rights in our joint declaration after the European Social Conference of 2 March 2017 in Paris. This is why we call now on all EU Member States to **proclaim the 20 principles included in the European Pillar of Social Rights**.

Yet, because the crisis in Europe is not acceptable and because principles will not suffice, we also call **for the adoption of a fully-fledged Social Action Plan**. We want the **principles of the pillar to be matched with clear measures** for progress, with the leverage to immediately improve the reality of Europeans across the continent.

Some elements of this plan are already on the table and were proposed as part of the social package unveiled on 26 April¹. These can be the starting point of a Social Action Plan, but to ensure the effectiveness of the 20 principles **and real results on the ground**, more measures **and initiatives by the EU, by Member States and by the social partners** will be needed. Among other, the following measures should be part of the Social Action Plan:

- Equal pay and equal rights for work of equal value for all. This means concluding a **fair revision of the Posting of Workers Directive**.
- Improvement of **the coordination of social security systems**, in order for all workers to keep their social security coverage when moving to another Member State and for corresponding social contributions to be actually paid to the appropriate social security fund.
- A **European Labour Authority**, with the means to promote all EU rules on labour mobility and their enforcement in a fair, simple and effective way.
- Wealth will not trickle down by itself, this is why we call for the inclusion of a **clear objective for wage increase**, respecting national specificities, at least above the poverty level², in the European Semester and the inclusion of a wage indicator in the social scoreboard, along with increased support for collective bargaining as part of the EU's socio economic coordination.
- Similarly, **clear and binding targets to reduce the gender pay gap** must be introduced and monitored in the European Semester.

¹ The European Commission published several proposals on 26 April 2017: Proposal for an interinstitutional proclamation endorsing the European Pillar of Social Rights; Directive on Work-Life Balance; Social Partners consultation on the revision of the written statement Directive; interpretative communication on working time directive; Social Partners consultation on access to social protection in all forms of employment; ...

² The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers according to Eurostat's definition.



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- The definition of common rules for decent working conditions and health and safety at work, with a **directive on written statement and a directive on access to social protection that guarantee decent conditions in all forms of employment**.
- The evolution of work in our societies calls on us to lay the foundation for new rights: for example, for workers of the so called platform economy, we should reflect on a **right to disconnect**, support individual entitlements and opportunities for lifelong learning including through the creation of “Individual Activity Accounts” that ensure **the portability of these entitlements and other rights** of all workers and new forms of collective bargaining powers.
- An **ambitious and well-funded skills agenda**, that will entitle people to be equipped with the skills necessary to face the challenges of a fast changing labour market and increase employment options for each worker.
- A **permanent and extended European Youth Guarantee**, finally giving it the proper budget it requires.
- A **European Child Guarantee** a specific European fund to ensure children’s rights to healthcare, education, childcare, housing and nutrition, and finally provide an answer to the more than 25% of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU.
- A **European social protection floor** that guarantees universal access to essential quality health services and basic income security, to protect all European workers including self-employed people against the hazards of their working life, in particular to compensate the cost of transitions from one job to the other and the loss of income. This safety net should be designed in full respect of the subsidiarity principle.
- **Reinforced social dialogue**: employers and workers’ representatives, who are closest to social and economic realities, must be at the heart of the reforms and the regulation of our labour markets including in the digital economy.
- **The European Globalisation Fund** is an important instrument to prevent a further increase of unemployment. It should therefore be retained and strengthened.
- **Public services must be given sufficient means** to allow effective access to social housing, healthcare and essential services, as foreseen in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

A Social Action Plan, with such clear measures for each of the 20 principles of the Pillar of social rights, will demonstrate that the EU is serious about taking a social turn. It will show that **Europe can be an effective social shield for its citizens** and strengthen the European Social Model. On 17 November, the European Social Summit of Gothenburg will be an important step towards social Europe. For us, it is clear: **the future of the EU will either be social or will not be at all!**

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- **Ylva Johansson**, Minister for Employment and Integration, **Sweden**
- **Alois Stöger**, Minister of Social Affairs, Labour and Consumer Protection, **Austria**
- **Giuliano Poletti**, Minister of Labor and Social Policies, **Italy**
- **Katarina Barley**, Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, **Germany**
- **Evarist Bartolo**, Minister for Education and Employment, **Malta**
- **José António Vieira da Silva**, Minister of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security, **Portugal**
- **Jan Richter**, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, **Slovakia**
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