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## **Ensuring a strong social agenda in the next European legislature:**

### **Towards a Europe that Moves Forward with New Rights**

#### ***Non-paper by Belgium, Romania, Slovenia & Spain***

The next European mandate must be a new period of strong social progress in the European project, building on the achievements of the current mandate. The next five years are an opportunity to reduce inequalities, fight climate change and further improve living and working conditions for all Europeans.

Social policies are crucial for a resilient EU. For a more competitive Europe we have to deepen labour and social rights, building a more inclusive economy and society. Progress towards a stronger single market and a more competitive Europe in a complex geopolitical context must more than ever put social and labour rights at the centre. Social Europe must be at the heart of the European project.

This document gathered support to build a coalition of the willing in order to define specific proposals for a renewed European social agenda for the immediate future. A renewed agenda that must be transformative and ambitious to help achieve the employment, training, and poverty reduction goals that the European Union has set for 2030 in the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

This document identifies concrete proposals that can have tangible impact on the life of European citizens, addressing their current and emerging needs. It builds on the momentum of the Val Duchesse and La Hulpe Declarations and has the European Pillar of Social Rights as compass.

### **The European Pillar of Social Rights as compass**

The European Pillar of Social Rights must continue to serve as our compass during this new mandate. The Pillar should be strengthened to become the bedrock of the economic and social governance framework.

An ambitious renewed Action Plan starting in 2025 should be the basis for stronger workers' rights, with initiatives on rights that are yet to be developed or have only been partially developed.

### **Specific proposals for the next legislature**

In view of the ongoing structural challenges, we are committed to work in the next European legislature:

- **For a European Union where workers enjoy decent working and living conditions and are free to enjoy their time, creating new labour rights and preventing precariousness by:**
  - Swiftly adopting the proposed package for the quality framework of **traineeships** aiming at a high level of protection and effectively fighting bogus traineeships.
  - Strengthening the **European Labour Authority** to prevent the erosion of labour standards, ensuring a level playing field as the appropriate framework for a fair labour mobility in the EU, and effectively tackling fraud and undeclared work across the Union.
  - Ensuring **full transposition** of the **Minimum Wage** Directive and developing common reference framework for wage developments' monitoring.
  - Guaranteeing full implementation of the **Social Convergence Framework** within an effective European Semester, based on increased capacities to monitor and correct social imbalances.
  - Continuing the work on **Social investment** with the creation of a **Knowledge Hub** with the aim to support Member States and incentivise them to invest in their social protection systems.
- **For a European Union that leads on fair green and digital transitions and ensures labour rights by:**
  - Swiftly adopting a Directive on **Teleworking and the Right to Disconnect** to align EU regulation with the demands to preserve workers' rights in the digital age. Building on an in-depth assessment of the existing legislation, reflecting on an initiative at European level on **working time** and the use of personal time.
  - Adopting an **EU initiative** setting out the rights of workers in relation to the **use of artificial intelligence and algorithms at work**, so that they are subject to human control and the digital transition is fair and in the service of workers, respecting their individual and collective rights.
  - The positive **experience gained with SURE** could be an example for a new **initiative** during the new legislature, for instance to ensure that the twin transitions are fair and inclusive and also to preserve employment from economic shocks.
  - **Adopting an EU action that effectively recognizes the right to on-the-job training** and establishes a **general framework** for the exercise and guarantee of this right (duration, remuneration, role of the social dialogue).

Although the right to training is the first principle of the Pillar, it is not regulated at EU level. The right to lifelong learning is an essential right aimed at helping all people to develop in their professional careers and to improve their job opportunities.

- Promoting **Green Collective Bargaining** for a fair Green transition that meets the objectives of the climate neutrality.
- Promoting the adaptation of the European health and safety framework to the new risks derived from climate change, as well as to the digital transition by adopting an **initiative on mental health in the workplace** and a **Directive on psychosocial risks at work**.
- **For a European Union that makes democracy at work and social dialogue a reality** to contribute to the sustainable development of the EU and to a highly competitive economic model that generates full employment and social progress by:
  - Finalising an ambitious revision of the **European Works Council Directive** ensuring it effectively addresses the enforcement shortcomings and enhances consultation and participation rights in transnational issues.
  - Updating the Directive 2002/14/EC on **information and consultation rights**, to focus on preventive measures that allow to adapt to transitions and sectoral change, including especially taking into account the use of artificial intelligence and algorithms in work organisation or guaranteeing representative bodies that are appropriate to the new forms of business organisation.
  - Adopting a European **framework for the participation of employees** in the administrative, management or supervisory bodies of companies building on the existing models within the EU to ensure a more democratic management of corporate decisions.
  - Supporting European **social dialogue and the adoption of cross-sectoral agreements** for the improvement of working conditions by European social partners, respecting their autonomy.
  - Highlighting **the role of trade unions** in collective bargaining, social conditioning, and ensuring a just and equitable workplace for all.
  - Ensuring an ambitious **follow-up to the Val Duchesse Declaration** of January 2024 on the strengthening of Social Dialogue.



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- **For a European Union that fully realises the potential of the social economy by:**
  - Fully implementing all initiatives included in the **Social Economy Action Plan** for promoting social economy as a model of social and economic development capable of offering high-performance, inclusive and sustainable economic activities that serve the collective interest.
  - Further developing common framework conditions for the social economy, offering legal certainty and access to **adequate funding for social economy** actors throughout their life cycle.