

ANNEX

- Confirmation Hearings for Commissioners-designate 2024-2029

QUESTIONS EMPL

1. Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President-designate for People, Skills and Preparedness

1. The Parliament is concerned about the fragmentation of social and employment policy and its inclusion in numerous portfolios of Commissioners-designate as well as the missing social and employment dimension in Executive Vice-President-designate Roxana Mînzatu's title. How does the Vice-President-designate intend to ensure that this fragmentation does not undermine the implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social rights? How will you cooperate with the other Commissioners to achieve these objectives? Also, would you agree to change your title to "Executive Vice-President for quality jobs, social rights, skills and education" and take necessary measures to consolidate social and employment policies and ensure efficient structures and oversight?
2. Building on the La Hulpe declaration, which legislative initiatives do you commit to put forward in the new Action Plan on the EPSR, such as digitalisation at work, housing and collective bargaining, in order to achieve the 2030 targets? What concrete measures and actions will you propose to tackle critical skills and labour shortages in European labour markets and to create good opportunities in all regions of Europe? How will you ensure that all workers, especially low-skilled workers, can benefit from the Union of Skills and can enjoy the right to training as well as equal access to upskilling and reskilling programmes, especially in light of the green and digital transitions?
What concrete measures and actions will you propose to facilitate labour mobility, ensuring a strong and empowered European Labour Authority (ELA), and further modernisation, simplification and digitalisation of social security coordination, as stated in your mission letter?
Moreover, what new and revised occupational exposure limit values on hazardous substances are you planning to propose under the EU OSH legislation, ensuring a level playing field for businesses?

3. Around 95 million people in the Union live at risk of poverty and social exclusion, including 19 million children. Even 11% of workers are exposed to this risk. Which concrete legislative initiatives will you propose in the context of the first ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, announced by Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen? What role will the European Semester and the European Child Guarantee play in this strategy to ensure progress towards the EPSR Action Plan goal of reduction of poverty? How will you ensure the next MFF does more to eradicate poverty and social exclusion? Beyond the Council recommendation, what concrete follow-up measures will you give to calls from the European Parliament to guarantee the adequacy, and increase the coverage and take-up of minimum income schemes?

Will you present a Directive on adequate minimum income in order to ensure the reintegration of people absent from the labour market while respecting the subsidiarity principle and the specificities of national social protection systems?

2. Dan Jørgensen, Commissioner-designate for Energy and Housing

1. Many people suffer from a lack of affordable housing. How will you ensure that the first ever European Affordable Housing Plan, announced by Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen, will provide enough affordable housing to respond to the housing needs of the low and middle income groups? What concrete actions do you foresee, in particular to ensure that the Plan will allow the necessary public and private investment to provide affordable, accessible housing and opportunities for all? How will you guarantee the “housing first” principle as it has proven to be effective on both economic and social terms to end homelessness? What is your approach with regard to private property in the context of any Union action in the area of housing? How are you going to ensure close cooperation with Executive Vice-President-designate Minzatu in this context?
2. Your mission letter indicates that your work will help address energy poverty and ensure a social, just and competitive transition. What policies do you intend to implement to protect those most impacted by energy poverty, ensuring affordable renovation and access to green housing? How will the Action Plan for Affordable Energy Prices tackle energy poverty? What specific incentives do you foresee to foster the long-term development of green social and public housing, green buildings and the reduction of energy costs for both owners and tenants?
3. Your mission letter instructs you to support the Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition to work on reforming State Aid rules to enable housing support measures, notably social housing. What changes to the EU state aid rules and the social housing definition in the services of general economic interest (SGI) legislation do you envisage in order to ensure that housing is excluded from market rules and that sufficient social housing is provided? Will you, as Commissioner, endeavour to achieve explicit exemptions from the fiscal rules for state investment in housing?

3. Teresa Ribera Rodríguez, Executive Vice-President-designate for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition

1. Your portfolio covers the clean, just and competitive transition, which, according to your mission letter, must be ‘for the benefit of people and their jobs’. However, your responsibilities barely mention the social aspects of the just transition. How do you plan to work with Executive Vice-President-designate Roxana Mînzatu? What concrete measures are you going to take to ensure that the most vulnerable households are protected and that the transition is beneficial for workers, that their rights are respected and promoted and no one is left behind? Will you deliver an initiative on anticipation and management of change in the world of work, in the context of the Just Transition?

What concrete measures are you going to take in the better regulation agenda to ensure the EU labour law acquis and to ensure improved employment rights and social standards?

In particular, in view of the national Social Climate Plans expected by June 2025, how will you ensure that the Social Climate Fund does not only provide short-term support to vulnerable households but also triggers long-term changes to lift people out of energy and transport poverty? With the Just Transition Fund ending in 2027, what specific measures do you plan to accompany companies and workers in the transformation towards climate neutrality? How do you intend to contribute to the Union of skills?

4. Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice-President-designate for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy

1. As Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, you will be in charge of the revision of the Public Procurement Directive. This Directive can play a pivotal role in the promotion of high labour standards. Social partners at EU level are very clear on the necessity to bring more protection to European workers through this Directive.

How will you ensure that the social aspects of the EU public procurement legislation are strengthened, notably with regard to social award criteria in public contracts, in view of: limiting subcontracting chains and regulating the role of labour intermediaries; ensuring the respect of workers' rights and the application of collective agreements; enhancing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and workers with support needs; ensuring that not-for-profit/social economy providers of social services are not excluded from public contracts?

5. Raffaele Fitto, Executive Vice-President-designate for Cohesion and Reforms

1. Your mission letter insists “for all citizens to have an effective right to stay [...] by supporting what a community needs” notably by “tackl[ing] regional disparities”. Among other policies, this touches upon employment and social policies, including social inclusion. What concrete proposals and measures do you foresee to address this challenge and to improve access to quality social and employment services, and how do you see the Recovery and Resilience Facility plans contributing to this objective, and more generally, to the effective implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights?

In particular, given the EU's commitment to promoting deinstitutionalisation and ensuring that persons with disabilities, children, and other groups in a vulnerable situation live with equal rights, how do you plan to ensure that future EU funding and cohesion policy does effectively support community-based services and affordable housing solutions? How do you intend to work on this with Commissioner-designate Jørgensen?

6. Valdis Dombrovskis, Commissioner-designate for Economy and Productivity / Implementation and Simplification

1. How will you make sure that the implementation of the better regulation agenda helps to improve the employment situation across the EU, ensures the EU labour law acquis and that it does not result in lower employment rights and social standards nor prevents further legislative initiatives and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, including its headline targets? Which concrete steps will you take to strengthen the monitoring of upward social convergence in the EU?

7. Dubravka Šuica, Commissioner-designate for Mediterranean

1. In the context of the changing world of work, how will you address Europe's demographic challenges and its consequences for individuals and their families, such as population ageing, brain drain and a shrinking working-age population? What long-term incentives for living and working in the European Union do you foresee? And what measures will you implement to increase the participation in the labour market for under-represented groups? What do you think in this legislative term should be the main focus points in this field?

8. Wopke Hoekstra, Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth

1. Your mission letter mentions that you “will further strengthen the framework for a social and just transition”. The current framework for just transition in the European Green Deal is a mix of guidance, monitoring and funding instruments. In the face of high energy and living costs and growing inequalities, the EU should establish a more ambitious and robust framework, including binding measures, and address the environmental and social dimensions in a complementary way from the outset.

As Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth, what concrete legislative actions will you take to ensure a social and just transition for all? What measures will you propose as part of a strengthened just transition framework and how will you promote the availability, accessibility and affordability of sustainable products and services? How will you contribute to the creation of sustainable quality jobs, the application of collective agreements and the enforcement of information and consultation rights of workers? And how will you involve the social partners in that work?

9. Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner-designate for Preparedness and Crisis Management / Equality

1. As Commissioner-designate for Equality, how will you mainstream equality concerns across all relevant policy areas and ensure a cohesive and inclusive approach, for example between the various equality strategies in your area of responsibility and the new Anti-Poverty Strategy, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and the new European Affordable Housing Plan? Regarding the new Gender Equality Strategy, what actions do you foresee to close the gender pay and pension gap? What legislative measures do you envisage in order to strengthen the position of women in the workplace, and in particular to tackle the many disadvantages faced by women through the ‘motherhood penalty’ as referred to by EIGE? How will the Strategy address work-life balance for parents and carers particularly as regards early childcare provision to facilitate women’s return to the labour market?

Do you commit to update the current Strategy for the Rights of persons with disabilities with new flagship initiatives for 2025 - 230 and what priority areas would you focus on for the coming years? How will you ensure the proper implementation of legislation like the European Disability Card and European Parking Card in order to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities? In line with the EU and Member States’ obligations under the UNCRPD, what other EU actions do you foresee to improve the social and economic situation of persons with disabilities, in particular to address barriers to their freedom of movement and their ability to reside and work in different EU Member States?

10. Glenn Micallef, Commissioner-designate for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport

1. In your mission letter, you are tasked with preparing a Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness and to implement youth checks. However, an intergenerational approach needs to be holistic and focus on all generations. What actions and measures will you propose to ensure the social inclusion of all generations and their full participation in society and the economy? What legislative initiatives do you envisage with regard to youth and intergenerational fairness and how are you going to cooperate with Executive Vice-President-designate Mînzatu in this context?