

25/09/2026

Public letter on the upcoming Quality Jobs Act to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu

Dear President,
Dear Executive Vice-President,

Quality jobs and good working conditions are key to the wellbeing of people and economies across Europe. The upcoming **Quality Jobs Act** is a central legislative commitment of this European mandate, which our political family has long called for, and which must be delivered with ambition. We, Chairs of the **EPSCO Ministers Network, Social Europe Network of the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the Vice-President of the S&D Group for Social Europe**, strongly support an ambitious Quality Jobs Act making a difference for workers across Europe.

In a world of **uncertainty**, Europe is facing profound economic, social and security challenges. Yet, these challenges must never become a pretext for putting social progress on hold. **We hear people's discontent:** high **costs of living** continue hurting them. Millions of Europeans are struggling to pay for the essentials of everyday life, from housing and healthcare to energy, food and transport. Roughly a third of Europeans envisage their standard of living to decrease over the next five years.¹ Workers, unions and collective bargaining are under attack. In a context where far-right forces seek to **divide our societies**, people's hardship is exploited. **Europe cannot accept declining living standards as the new normal.** Fair wages and decent working conditions are key to tackling the affordability crisis and restoring people's trust in Europe and its social model. Moreover, it is essential to provide quality work and opportunities for young people, to tackle youth unemployment, and to provide paid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships. We reiterate the importance of implementing the **Pay Transparency Directive** in all Member States. It is indispensable in fighting the gender pay gap and ensuring equal pay. The **Fair Labour Mobility Package, Anti-Poverty Strategy and Adequate Minimum Wage Directive** also strongly contribute to fighting inequality and low pay. Building on this, the Quality Jobs Act therefore comes at a crucial moment and must live up to these expectations and responsibility. The EU must demonstrate that investments in our

¹ European Parliament, Eurobarometer Spring 2026 Survey, available [here](#).



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security, sovereignty and competitiveness **must go hand in hand with social measures. We want an affordable Europe that delivers better living and working conditions for all.**

We cannot compromise on Social Europe and quality jobs. **They are a vital source of Europe's resilience and prosperity, not an obstacle to them.** We must *strengthen* working conditions, not water them down under the guise of simplification. Weakening social rights, reducing corporate accountability or making workers' pay for fiscal adjustment will not make Europe more competitive. Precarious and exhausted workers cannot build a sovereign and strategically autonomous Europe. **Instead, it is quality jobs, empowered, skilled and protected workers that underpin Europe's productivity and resilience.** Furthermore, good regulation protects responsible employers and prevents unfair competition. We reject any deregulation attempts and Omnibus provisions that undermine workers' rights, trade union rights, and social protection in Europe.

The Quality Jobs Act is an opportunity, commitment, and responsibility to respect. Its ambition must be reflected in strong legislative action **truly supporting workers and strengthening trade unions.** This is how the EU can demonstrate its strong added value. We call for:

- **A directive on AI and algorithmic management in the workplace.** It is time to extend the protections of the Platform Work Directive to all workers and codify the 'human-in-control' principle. Workers must be protected against excessive surveillance, opaque algorithmic management and automated decisions, with strong requirements for transparency and workplace democracy, accountability and human oversight.
- **EU legislation to improve worker protections across subcontracting chains and labour intermediation.** We need joint and several liability across subcontracting chains. Regulation of subcontracting must also be strengthened, including by limiting long and complex subcontracting chains and prohibiting subcontracting practices in specific high-risk sectors. Bogus posting and bogus self-employment must be tackled, and unfair recruitment practices banned.
- **EU legislation for safe and healthy working conditions and secure employment.** Workers must be protected from physical and psychosocial risks. We support the extension of health and safety regulations to protect workers from severe weather hazards, heat stress and low temperatures at work. The Quality Jobs Act must also include a dedicated directive addressing psychosocial risks at work and occupational diseases, work-related musculoskeletal disorders, and gender-based violence and harassment at work.
- **Binding EU legislation on telework and the right to disconnect.** We want workers to be able to effectively disconnect from work without facing negative consequences. Transparency, equal treatment for teleworkers as on-site workers, safeguards against work intensification and robust enforcement mechanisms are key. Employers must take responsibility for related costs and ensure compliance with occupational health and safety requirements.

- **Equal opportunities and equal pay in labour markets.** The Quality Jobs Act and European Care Deal should work hand in hand to address gender inequalities in the labour market. Accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare and long-term care are essential to allow for women's equal participation in the labour market. Measures should include improving the job quality, pay, and recognition of female-dominated sectors, stronger rights for flexible working arrangements without career penalties, and support for collective bargaining.
- **A directive on the inclusion of persons excluded from the labour market.** Following the Commission's commitment to launch a social partner consultation on the activation and inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, we call for a legislative initiative that guarantees every person a pathway to quality employment. We also push for extended support for local job guarantee experiments, to help the more than four million that are long-term unemployed find their way to a meaningful job. Nobody should be trapped between poverty and precarious work. Activation must be empowering, and not punitive.
- **Fair wages and upward social convergence.** With too many people across Europe struggling to pay their daily essentials, wages must be fair. The Quality Jobs Act must speak to workers from across socio-economic backgrounds who feel that the economy no longer works for them. It should be in line with and support the full and timely implementation of the adopted Adequate Minimum Wages Directive and Pay Transparency Directive.
- **Democracy at work through strengthening trade unions, collective bargaining and information, consultation and participation of workers.** The Quality Jobs Act must support the protection of rights and prerogatives of unions at European and national level, including their access to workplaces, digital workplaces, and platform work, the right to organise, join and participate in unions, to bargain collectively, and to strike. It should promote a considerable increase of collective bargaining coverage towards 80%, strengthen solid social dialogue structures and provide a voice for workers in corporate governance. We also support workers and the involvement of their trade unions in anticipating and managing change through a Directive on Just Transition in the world of work, including access to training without cost for the workers and during working time.
- **A Quality Jobs Act backed by a Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) that genuinely invests in people and workers.** Overall social investments must be maintained to at least the level of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). It is clear that the proposed minimum target of 14% for social objectives under the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) is insufficient. We want a well-financed, self-standing European Social Fund dedicated to quality jobs, opportunities for young people, the eradication of child poverty and homelessness, and the fight against the housing crisis and social exclusion.

The EU has promised better working and living conditions, and the Quality Jobs Act must turn that promise into reality. We therefore call on you to ensure, from the very

top of the Commission, the political ambition and leadership needed for a strong Quality Jobs Act.

It is time to deliver.

Yours sincerely,

Korinna Schumann, Chair of the PES EPSCO Ministers Network, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection in Austria

Gaby Bischoff, Chair of the PES Social Europe Network, Vice-President of the S&D Group in the European Parliament