



# SOCIAL PRIORITIES UNDER THE JUNCKER COMMISSION

#FutureofEurope #EURoad2Sibiu

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*“It is up to us to ensure that the handwriting of the European Social Model is clearly visible in everything we do. Because Europe is the protective shield for all of us who can call this magnificent continent their home.”*

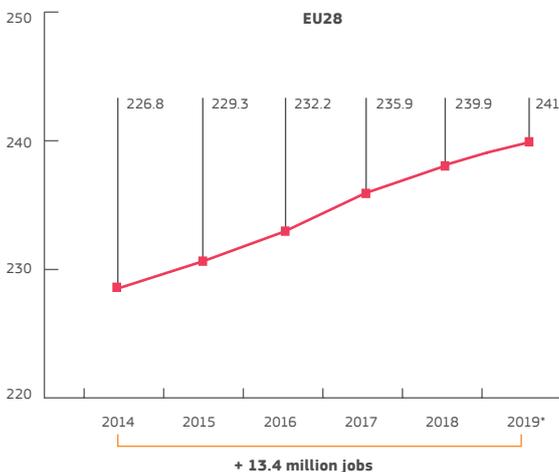
*European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker,  
Speech before the European Parliament, 22 October 2014*

Since the start of its mandate, the Juncker Commission has placed social priorities at the core of its action and at the heart of the debate on the future of Europe.

We have made significant progress: about 13.4 million jobs have been created since the start of the Juncker Commission, unemployment has reached its lowest level since the start of recordings in 2000, and with about 241 million people in employment, the employment level has never been as high as today. Although it is still too high, youth unemployment has also decreased significantly, from a peak of 24% in 2013 to 14.2% recently.

## EMPLOYMENT LEVEL IN THE EU 2014–2019\* (MILLIONS OF PEOPLE)

\* First quarter  
Data source: Eurostat, National Accounts, ECFIN.



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN THE EU 2014–2019\* (%)

\* Forecast  
Data source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey, ECFIN.



Thanks to the European Union and its Member States, there's a positive economic wind blowing in Europe's sails, but there must be no complacency. As of April 2019, 15.8 million persons were still unemployed, including 3.2 million young people.

At the same time, the world of work and our societies keep changing and there are as many new opportunities as there are challenges.

This Commission has taken and continues to take action to modernise Europe's social market economy and achieve a 'social triple A' for Europe. Together with the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, 24 initiatives proposed by the Commission in the social field have now been agreed upon. A deal was provisionally reached on social security coordination, which needs to be confirmed by the co-legislators. The other 2 proposals still on the table are linked to the broader discussion on the next long-term EU budget for 2021–2027, and will be decided in this context. The tables below recall progress in these six work streams, according to their status:

## KEY INITIATIVES UNDER THE JUNCKER COMMISSION IN THE EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL FIELD



● Presented by Commission / Agreed by European Parliament or Council / In place / in force

● Pending

● Not applicable

## ASSERTING SHARED VALUES: ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

At the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth on 17 November 2017, EU Institutions proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar expresses 20 principles and rights which are essential in the light of today's and tomorrow's social realities. It is a shared and future-proof commitment to assert and better deliver on the rights that Europeans stand for, from gender equality to social protection and from fair working conditions to lifelong learning. The Pillar serves as a framework for a renewed process of convergence towards better living and working conditions across the EU. Funds like the new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) will support the implementation of the Pillar.

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
			Commission proposal	Agreement	In place / in force
1	<a href="#">Establishment of the European Pillar of Social Rights</a>	President Juncker announced the establishment of a European Pillar of Social Rights in his September 2015 State of the Union Address. Following a <a href="#">public consultation that ran from March to December 2016</a> and a proposal tabled in April 2017, the Pillar was jointly proclaimed by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission at the Social Summit on 17 November 2017.	 April 2017	 November 2017	 November 2017
2	<a href="#">Presentation of the Social Scoreboard to monitor Member States' progress</a>	The Social Scoreboard was presented alongside the European Pillar of Social Rights to monitor Member States' progress on key employment and social indicators, in the spirit of the 'Social Triple A' Europe and mainstreamed as part of the European Semester.	 April 2017	 March 2018	 March 2018
3	<a href="#">Reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe</a>	Following the publication of the Commission's <a href="#">White Paper on the Future of Europe</a> in March 2017, the Commission presented a dedicated reflection paper on Europe's social dimension by 2025.	 April 2017		

## MAINSTREAMING SOCIAL PRIORITIES: ACKNOWLEDGING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION IN ALL POLICIES

Europe's social priorities cut across all policy domains. This Commission has put social considerations on par with economic ones in all its core activities, such as the European Semester of policy coordination, the deepening of Economic and Monetary Union, the Investment Plan for Europe (the so-called 'Juncker Plan') and flagship initiatives for the completion of the Single Market – from the Digital Single Market to the Energy Union – as well as in the EU's trade and international relations. Below are a couple of meaningful illustrations.

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
			Commission proposal	Agreement	In place / in force
4	<a href="#">Mainstreaming of social priorities and indicators in the European Semester of Economic Policy Coordination</a>	The Commission has put greater focus on social priorities and indicators in the annual cycle of EU economic governance – the European Semester. Since 2017, the priorities of the European Pillar of Social Rights have been integrated into the Semester, including by the adoption of the new Employment Guidelines.	 Yearly cycle		 November 2017 (Pillar)
5	<a href="#">Social impact assessment of the new Stability Support Programme for Greece</a>	When the Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Greece for a new stability support programme, it made sure to publish, for the first time, an <i>ex ante</i> social impact assessment of the new programme.	 August 2015		
6	<a href="#">Investment Plan for Europe</a>	Under the Investment Plan for Europe, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is able to provide financing for social infrastructure and equipment, as well as strategic investments in social enterprises. As of December 2018, 37 projects targeting the social sector in 16 Member States have been signed and are ready to get underway, with another 8 approved for financing. The EFSI also supports microfinance, young entrepreneurs and social enterprises by guaranteeing agreements made by the European Investment Fund and financial intermediaries. Altogether, the EFSI is currently expected to trigger €16 billion in investments in the social sector.	 November 2014	 May 2014	 June 2014

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
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7	Energy Union	The Commission's 'Clean energy for all Europeans' package focuses on tackling energy poverty by the roots, by adopting a social approach rather than implementing regulated energy prices. In addition, the package includes the establishment of a new Observatory on energy poverty and the exchange of best practices between Member States.	 November 2016	 December 2018	 July / August 2019
8	Digital Single Market	Through the WiFi4EU initiative, the Commission seeks to promote free Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens and visitors in public spaces such as parks, squares, public building, libraries, health centres, and museums everywhere in Europe by 2020.	 September 2016	 May 2017	 November 2017
9	Mobility in the transport sector	The EU's transport sector employs more than 5 million Europeans. Under the 'Europe on the Move' initiative, the Commission has put on the table proposals to ensure social fairness and competitiveness in this sector. The objective is to fight against illicit employment practices and 'letterbox companies', and to improve social and employment conditions in the transport sector, particularly for truck drivers. For instance, it includes rules to ensure good conditions for the drivers when they take their regular weekly rests and to ensure that they return home at regular intervals.	 May 2017	 Not before second half of 2019	 Not before second half of 2019

## RENEWING AND MODERNISING SOCIAL LEGISLATION

The Commission has proposed several updates to the EU's legislation in order to bring the 'social acquis' in line with the needs of today's world of work. Part of this action is also to clarify and ensure easier take-up and implementation of existing rules.

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
			Commission proposal	Agreement	In place / in force
10	<a href="#">Legislation on making products and services more accessible for people with disabilities</a>	With the European Accessibility Act, the EU sets common accessibility requirements for certain key products and services such as ATMs and banking services, PCs and telephones, to help people with disabilities at EU level to participate fully in society.	 December 2015	 November 2018	 May / June 2019
11	<a href="#">Communication to improve health and safety at work</a>	With its Communication to improve health and safety at work, the Commission presented an action plan to better protect workers against work-related cancer and to help businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-enterprises, in their efforts to comply with the rules.	 January 2017		
12	<a href="#">Legislation on the protection of workers from exposure to cancer-causing chemicals at work</a>	As part of the Commission's action plan on health and safety at work, exposure to certain cancer-causing chemicals at the workplace has been limited further. Three batches of new and / or stricter exposure limits were introduced.  With this initiative, more than 100 000 lives will be saved in the next 50 years.	 First batch: May 2016	 June 2017	 December 2018
			 Second batch: January 2017	 October 2018	 January 2019
			 Third batch: April 2018	 January 2019	 May / June 2019

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
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13	Legislation to improve the work-life balance of working parent and carers	This initiative sets a number of higher minimum standards for working parents and carers, to increase the possibilities for men to take up caring responsibilities and support women's participation in the labour market. Fathers will get at least 10 days of paid paternity leave; 2 out of 4 months of guaranteed parental leave will become non-transferable between parents and carers will get at least 5 days of leave a year.	 April 2017	 January 2019	 May / June 2019
14	Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions	This initiative makes contracts and working conditions more transparent and predictable for all types of work, in particular atypical forms of work such as on-demand or part time work. For instance, workers with variable working schedules determined by the employer (i.e. on-demand work) should know in advance when they can be requested to work. Outside the agreed working time, they retain full right to refuse calls, and protection against unfair treatment.	 December 2017	 February 2019	 May / June 2019
15	Council Recommendation to ensure access to social protection for workers and the self-employed	With this Recommendation, the Commission encourages Member States to ensure that everyone who works has access to social protection coverage and employment services on the basis of their contributions, in particular people in non-standard forms of employment and the self-employed.	 March 2018	 December 2018	 Second half of 2019
16	Guidance on the implementation of the Working Time Directive	This document provides guidance on how to interpret various aspects of the Directive in line with a growing body of case law, such as the nature and conditions related to rest periods, on-call and standby periods, the implementation of paid annual leave.	 April 2017		 April 2017

## FAIR AND ENFORCEABLE RULES FOR LABOUR MOBILITY

Labour mobility is one of the most cherished freedoms of our EU: more than eight in ten Europeans support the free movement of citizens and the possibility to live, work, study and do business anywhere in the EU. The Commission wants to strengthen labour mobility by establishing clear and fair rules, by facilitating cooperation between Member States and by fighting cases of abuse.

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
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17	<a href="#">European platform to enhance cooperation in tackling undeclared work</a>	The European Platform tackling undeclared work enhances cooperation between EU countries. It brings together relevant actors involved in fighting undeclared work, to tackle this issue more effectively and efficiently, while fully respecting national competences and procedures. The platform was launched in May 2016.	 April 2014	 November 2015	 March 2016
18	<a href="#">Legislation to revise the rules on the posting of workers</a>	The Proposal establishes the principle 'equal pay for equal work at the same place'. Building on the 2014 Enforcement Directive on Posted Workers, which entered into force in June 2016, it also foresees new arrangements for administrative cooperation between Member States.	 March 2016	 February 2018	 June 2018
19	<a href="#">Legislation to modernise the rules on the coordination of social security systems</a>	This Proposal seeks to establish a closer link between where social contributions are paid and where they are being received. It also provides better tools for cooperation between Member State authorities and covers new aspects such as long-term care.	 December 2016	 March 2019 (pending confirmation)	 Not before second half of 2019
20	<a href="#">Proposal to establish a European Labour Authority</a>	This new Authority will facilitate access for individuals and employers to information, support cooperation between Member States in the cross-border enforcement of EU rules and mediate in cases of cross-border disputes related to labour mobility.	 March 2018	 February 2019	 May / June 2019

## INVESTING IN YOUTH AND SKILLS

Investing in Europe's human capital and the future of its youth are among the most important actions to make Europe's economies and societies more cohesive, competitive and more resilient in the light of changes in the world of work. By issuing detailed policy guidance, boosting the Youth Guarantee, maximising the use of the European Social Fund and rolling out the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission is supporting actors at all levels. The Commission has also launched a European Solidarity Corps to provide volunteering and occupational opportunities for young Europeans.

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
			Commission proposal	Agreement	In place / in force
21	Legislation to boost the Youth Guarantee by increasing the pre-financing of the Youth Employment Initiative and raising its financing for 2017–2020	<p>The Youth Guarantee is a political commitment taken by Member States in April 2013 to give every person under the age of 25 a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The Youth Employment Initiative is the main EU funding programme to facilitate the roll-out of the Youth Guarantee. The Commission proposed to pre-finance €1 billion from the Youth Employment Initiative to boost the Youth Guarantee as of 2015.</p> <p>Extra funding was secured for the period 2017–2020. In 2017, the Youth Employment Initiative was topped up by €1.2 billion and matched by €1.2 billion of funding from the European Social Fund.</p> <p>In 2019, the Commission proposed a further top-up of €166.7 million.</p>	<p>● February 2015</p> <p>● October 2017</p> <p>● February 2019</p>	<p>● May 2015</p> <p>● December 2017</p> <p>● April 2019</p>	<p>● May 2015</p> <p>● December 2017</p> <p>● April / May 2019</p>
22	Council Recommendation on integrating the long-term unemployed in the labour market	This Recommendation outlines the support to be provided to the long-term unemployed to facilitate their return to work. For instance, it foresees that all jobseekers, who have been out of work for more than 12 months, receive an individual assessment.	<p>● September 2015</p>	<p>● December 2015</p>	<p>● February 2016</p>
23	Council Recommendation on “Upskilling Pathways”: New Opportunities for Adults	The Recommendation calls on Member States to develop a series of targeted interventions to improve and consolidate support to low skilled/low qualified adults. For instance, it foresees that each beneficiary would receive a skills’ assessment; a learning offer designed around this assessment; and opportunities to have acquired skills validated and recognised.	<p>● June 2016</p>	<p>● November 2016</p>	<p>● December 2016</p>
24	Initiatives to support the modernisation of vocational education and training, including ErasmusPro and the European Quality Framework on Apprenticeships	<p>The new <a href="#">ErasmusPro initiative</a> is aimed at supporting 50 000 placements of vocational learners in companies to spend at least 3 to 12 months abroad for the period 2018–2020.</p> <p>The Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships provides 14 key criteria that Member States and stakeholders should use to develop quality and effective apprenticeships.</p>	<p>● December 2016</p> <p>● October 2017</p>	<p>● March 2018</p>	<p>● March 2018</p>

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
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25	<a href="#">Launch of the European Solidarity Corps</a>	The European Solidarity Corps was first mentioned by President Juncker in his 2016 State of the Union Address and launched in December 2016. The initiative gives young people between the ages of 18 and 30 the possibility to sign up for new opportunities to make a contribution to society across the EU, and to gain experience and acquire skills at the start of their career. In March 2019, more than 120 000 young people were registered with the Solidarity Corps, and almost 12 000 participants active in projects.	● May 2017	● June 2018	● October 2018
26	<a href="#">Legislation to make skills and qualifications more visible through a revision of Europass and a Recommendation to revise the European Qualifications Framework (under the New Skills Agenda for Europe)</a>	The Commission adopted a revision of the Europass Framework in October 2016, offering people better tools to present their skills and get useful real-time information on skills needs.	● October 2016	● December 2017	● May 2018
		The review of the European Qualifications Framework allows for a better understanding and comparison of qualifications and available skills in the European labour market.	● June 2016	● May 2017	● May 2017
27	<a href="#">Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition</a>	A Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition has been established to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe, bringing together Member States, companies, social partners, non-profit organisations and education providers.	● December 2016	●	●
28	<a href="#">BluePrint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills</a>	The Blueprint is a strategic framework that brings together business, trade unions, education and training providers and public authorities to deliver solutions to sector-specific skills needs in an era of technological change and rapidly evolving skills needs. It was launched in January 2017, focussing on five sectors (automotive; maritime technology; space/geo information; textile, leather clothing & footwear; and tourism). This has been extended with four more sectors in 2018 (construction, steel, additive manufacturing, and maritime shipping) and more sectors will be added in 2019.	● January 2017	●	●
29	<a href="#">Recommendation on higher education and vocational graduate tracking (under the New Skills Agenda for Europe)</a>	Proposal for a Council Recommendation on graduate tracking to encourage and support Member State authorities to improve the quality and availability of information on how graduates from higher education and vocational training progress in their careers or further education after finishing their studies.	● May 2017	● November 2017	● November 2017
30	<a href="#">The EU Skills Profile Tool for non-EU nationals</a>	Off and online web editor that enables non-EU nationals to present their skills, qualifications, and experiences in a way that is well understood by employers, education and training providers and organisations working with migrants across the EU. Launched in 2017, the tool is regularly updated and improved.	● June 2017	●	●

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
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31	European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)	In line with its <a href="#">proposals</a> for the long-term EU budget 2021–2027, the European Social Fund Plus will be the EU's main financial instrument to strengthen Europe's social dimension, with a proposed budget of €101 billion over the seven-year period. In the past 60 years, the ESF has helped millions of Europeans find a job, gain a qualification or certificate and increase their skills levels.	 May 2018	 Second half of 2019	 2019–2020
32	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)	Together with the ESF+, the Commission proposed a revised EGF for the period 2021–2027 worth €1.6 billion, which can intervene more effectively to support workers who have lost their jobs. Since its set-up in 2007, 20 countries have applied for help from the Fund and more than 110 000 dismissed workers have been supported.	 May 2018	 Second half of 2019	 2019–2020

## RELAUNCHING SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The Commission launched a 'New Start for Social Dialogue' in March 2015 to strengthen the role of social partners at all levels. A quadripartite agreement was signed in June 2016, reaffirming the **fundamental role of the European social dialogue** as a significant component of EU employment and social policy making. The agreement identifies actions to be undertaken by the signatories with the aim of further strengthening social dialogue at EU and national level.

	Proposal	Description	Status*		
			Commission proposal	Agreement	In place / in force
33	Launch of a New Start for Social Dialogue	In March 2015, the European Commission together with the social partners launched a renewed partnership between social partners and the EU institutions to focus on a number of priorities to promote growth and create jobs.	● March 2015	● March 2015	● March 2015
34	Quadripartite Agreement as part of the New Start for Social Dialogue	Agreement concluded in June 2016 between the EU employer organisations, trade unions, Presidency of the Council of the European Union and Commission reaffirming the fundamental role of the European social dialogue in the EU's policy making process.	● June 2016	● June 2016	● June 2016
35	Legislation on improving working conditions in the fishing sector, implementing an agreement of EU social partners	In 2013, the EU social partners in the fishing sector reached an agreement, which proposed to align EU law with the 'Work in Fishing' Convention 2007 of the International Labour Organisation. The agreement aims at improving the working conditions in the fishing sector and provides for a higher level of protection of EU fishermen.	● April 2016	● October 2016	● October 2016
36	Legislation to improve the working conditions of seafarers on board of EU-flagged vessels, implementing a social partners agreement	In July 2017 the Commission adopted a Proposal for a Council Directive implementing the social partners' agreement to reflect the latest changes to the Maritime Labour Convention.	● July 2017	● December 2017	● December 2017