



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.08.2016  
C(2016) 5446 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Commission's Communication "Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights" {COM(2016) 127 final}. The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's support for making the social dimension of the EU more visible and for the objective of upwards convergence.*

*The Commission concurs with the Bundesrat's view that the social dimension of the European Semester should be further strengthened in order to reach the Europe 2020 targets for poverty reduction and employment. We consider the preliminary outline of the Pillar as a tool to achieve this goal.*

*Once established, the Pillar could serve as a reference to screen Member States' employment and social performance in the light of changing work patterns and societies, to drive the process of reforms at national level. It could also act as a compass for renewed convergence within the Euro area. The Bundestag is perfectly right to refer to the very successful German system of dual vocational training. These and other best practices provide a basis for mutual learning and can be a source of inspiration for other Member States. The Pillar will facilitate this development.*

*The Commission duly takes note of the Bundesrat's position on the need for clarification regarding the concrete implementation of the proposed principles and the call for a cautious approach in proposing new legislation pointing to the principle of subsidiarity.*

*While the Commission is very aware that education is primarily a competence of Member States and their regions, links and partnerships with labour market stakeholders and businesses become increasingly important.*

*Mr Stanislaw TILLICH  
President of the Bundesrat  
Leipziger Straße 3 - 4  
D – 10117 BERLIN*

*The Commission would like to point out that the legal form of the Pillar remains to be decided. It is precisely the aim of this consultation to receive the views of a broad spectrum of society – from Member States' authorities to social partners and citizens – in order to come forward with more concrete proposals next year. The consultation will run until 31 December 2016 and the results of the consultation will help shaping the final version of the Pillar to be presented soon.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Member of the Commission*