



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 12.10.2017
C(2017)6757 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion on the Communication "Establishing a European Pillar of Social Rights" {COM(2017) 250 final}.

The favourable assessment by the Camera dei Deputati for the objectives of the initiative offers a good basis for taking forward together the implementation of the Pillar. At the same time, however, the Commission takes note of the concerns expressed by the Camera dei Deputati on some of the key aspects of the Pillar such as its legal nature, the need for binding social indicators, compulsory assessment of social impacts, the introduction of redistributive mechanisms, fostering social investment, and the integration of the refugees.

The Commission wishes to clarify that the Pillar of Social Rights does not itself modify or create new social rights. It builds on and complements the existing acquis by setting out key principles which should be shared by participating Member States in the conduct of their employment and social policies.

The Commission also respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality when it comes to the implementation of the Pillar. Designing strategies for convergence towards better working and living conditions should be compatible with sustainable public finances.

The Commission shares the opinion expressed by the Camera dei Deputati on the importance of adequate European structural and investment funds and other financial programmes.

*Ms Laura BOLDRINI
President of the Camera dei Deputati
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The proposed joint proclamation of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission would express a common political will for and joint vision of a strong social dimension of the European Union.

In response to the more specific comments in the Opinion the Commission would like to refer the Camera dei Deputati to the attached annex.

The Commission trusts that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Marianne Thyssen
Member of the Commission*

ANNEX

The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati in its Opinion and is pleased to offer the following clarifications.

Point a: *The Juncker Commission has been committed to support a stronger social Europe. Since the start of the mandate, it brought forward a number of concrete initiatives to deliver on social Europe. Examples include: continued support of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, launch of the European Solidarity Corps, proposals on posting of workers and social security coordination, as well as more emphasis on social policies in the European Semester. The publication of the European Pillar of Social Rights was also accompanied by concrete initiatives such as Work-life balance, the Written Statement Directive, and Access to social protection.*

Point b: *The aim of the social scoreboard is to monitor developments made by Member States on their social and employment performances. The scoreboard will be used in the framework of the European Semester. It expands the existing scoreboard of Key Economic and Social Indicators with further dimensions. It will substitute it in the monitoring currently being carried out in the annual Joint Employment Report published each autumn alongside the Annual Growth Survey. Within the framework of the European Semester, the scoreboard can be used to establish a stronger macro-social coordination and to foster upwards convergence. The scoreboard is not meant to be binding as the fiscal targets.*

Point c: *The Commission is a firm supporter of social impact assessments. From the beginning of his mandate, President Juncker¹ has made it clear that any reform programme should go not only through a fiscal sustainability assessment but also a social impact assessment. Thus, the third assistance programme on Greece was accompanied by a social impact assessment.*

Point d: *The Commission is examining ways to strengthen the macroeconomic stabilization function in the Eurozone area. One option considered is a European Unemployment Benefit Scheme whether in the form of a reinsurance fund or as direct support to unemployed. The pros and cons of various options are being analysed, in terms of stabilisation and social impact and in terms of cost. The scheme would require some prior convergence of labour market policies and institutional settings, in order to tackle moral hazard and support the building up of mutual trust among the countries participating in the scheme.*

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/juncker-political-guidelines-speech_en_0.pdf.

Point e: *The Stability and Growth Pact already provides (through the structural reform clause and the investment clause) for margins of flexibility without compromising fiscal responsibility. Thus, the Commission sees no need for reforming the European fiscal rules to assert a "golden rule" on social investments.*

Point f: *The principles and rights enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights are addressed to Union citizens and legally residing third country nationals in Member States, regardless of their employment status, as well as to public authorities and social partners. Thus, to the extent that refugees receive legal status, the principles of the Pillar cover them.*

Point g: *The European Structural and Investment Funds will support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. In particular, the European Social Fund, as well as other key initiatives for social cohesion such as the Youth Employment Initiative, the European Globalisation Fund and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, will play a key role in the follow-up to the Pillar. The Pillar will also play a role in the design of the post-2020 programming period.*