



Parlamentul României Senat

Bucharest, 11th May, 2020

Courtesy translation

OPINION

on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions COM (2020) 14 final

The Romanian Senate examined the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions - COM (2020) 14 final, according to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon (Protocol no.1), on the role of national parliaments in the European Union.

Based on the report of the Committee for European Affairs of 06.04.2020, **the plenum of the Senate**, during its session of May, 05, 2020:

- 1) considers that:
 - a. this communication is of particular importance because it focuses not only on transition but also on ensuring social equity, in the context in which past reforms have produced or fuelled major inequalities;
 - b. given the existence of a high percentage of people affected or at risk of poverty in the European Union and, especially, in Romania, the establishment of the Child Guarantee is necessary and welcome;
 - c. the promotion of the Strategy on Gender Equality must be followed by concrete measures, in particular to reduce the wage gap but also by creating the public services necessary to reconcile professional and personal life or public participation; a special place should be given to measures to reduce and eliminate gender-based violence;
 - d. the forthcoming draft strategic framework on Roma inclusion, which is a continuation of the current European strategy, must be truly undertaken by the Council and translated into action plans to target both those who are excluded / discriminated against and those who are excluded / discriminates;
 - e. the system of reinsurance for unemployment benefits, in order to guarantee their payment in the context of the high mobility of European citizens, is appropriate in a single market and may be one of the necessary but insufficient automatic stabilizers.
 - f. the European minimum wage, although reduced to a calculation formula, is an essential means of reducing income inequalities, constrained labour mobility and increasing confidence in the European project; its promotion must not, however, create the false impression that inequalities are only between low and

- high wages; the biggest inequality is between the share of GDP that goes to work and the part that goes to capital.
- 2) appreciates and supports:
- a. the launching of the European Union's industrial strategy, accompanied by a specific strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Decently paid jobs and the reduction of Member States' dependence on the supply of goods from third countries, especially those on which the safety of the population depends, are directly related to the reindustrialization process, given the new technologies - green and smart - of the European Union. Romania is particularly interested in the future of SMEs, which represent the largest share of domestic capital and employ most of the employees;
 - b. the promoting of the social economy within the strategies destined to create jobs. The action plans on the social economy lead to the *simultaneous* fulfilment of several objectives - they correlate with the objective of the short chain in production / distribution, offer development opportunities at the community level, strengthen solidarity and economic democracy;
 - c. the new approach to demographic policy at EU level; it no longer correlates social measures targeting demographic problems only with indicators of population aging. In the new paradigm, demographic issues and those related to horizontal population mobility and changes in family structures are also taken into account. The phenomenon of brain / hand drain, from which Romania is very strongly affected, is taken into account, but also by the increasing share of atypical families, such as single-parent families and specific social needs.
- 3) is aware that:
- a. the implementation of the initiatives proposed by the European Commission depends on the action of the Member States, as long as competences are shared or, in some cases, national; the available resources, the political will, and also the pressure of the society for social evolutions will influence the results;
 - b. it is necessary to present concrete proposals in order to assess the impact, the need for funding and the concrete measures;
 - c. the COVID-19 epidemic affecting all states also draws attention to the need for Community action in areas considered to be the responsibility of governments. Diseases have no borders; the economy, given the single market, has no borders. It is time for joint action, including on the sources of funding to combat the epidemic, its effects and to prevent future adverse situations, such as the supply of medical supplies and medicines. The financing of public health systems, the training of the necessary staff, their restoration and development, must be added to the objectives of the Social Pillar.
- 4) recommends that - in the context of the single market - part of the costs of implementing these measures must be borne by the Union; an inadequate budget and the refusal to pool those investments that are in the common good will deepen the gaps and inequalities between Member States and undermine the European Union.

p. President of the Senate
Robert - Marius CAZANCIUC

