



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 16.11.2021  
C(2021) 8166 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan {COM(2021) 102 final}.*

*The action plan, adopted by the Commission in March 2021, has greatly benefitted from the contributions made during the consultations conducted in the course of 2020 and early 2021 including with Government representatives and key stakeholders in Romania.*

*The European Pillar of Social Rights (hereafter the Social Pillar) stands at the heart of our efforts towards a fair and inclusive recovery. Social reforms and investments must accompany a fair digital and green transition, taking account of demographic changes. The action plan aims to implement the principles of the Social Pillar. It also constituted the Commission's input for the successful Social Summit in Porto, which took place on 7 and 8 May 2021.*

*The Porto Social Commitment, signed by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Commission, the Prime Minister of Portugal, EU's social partners and the Social Platform, and the Porto Declaration by the EU Heads of State and Government, adopted at the Social Summit, will drive the implementation of the Social Pillar in the coming months and years.*

*The Porto Declaration acknowledges the action plan and its key political priorities. It welcomes the new measurable EU-level 2030 headline targets in the areas of employment, skills and poverty reduction, and confirms the European Semester as the main tool to monitor progress toward these targets. It welcomes the proposal for a revised Social Scoreboard and underlines a very strong link between the economic recovery and the Social Pillar, which is crucial when it comes to the implementation of the recovery package. It also welcomes the EU social partners' proposals to identify the right indicators in order to go 'beyond GDP'.*

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*To contribute to the necessary concerted effort to reach the new targets, the action plan puts forward an ambitious set of actions at EU level. Some of them have already been adopted, such as the reinforced European Youth Guarantee, the Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training and the new European Child Guarantee.*

*The Commission agrees with the Camera Deputaţilor that increasing participation of adults in learning is a major policy priority and requires ambitious reforms. The Commission Work Programme for 2021 announced two initiatives to contribute to this goal, namely a European approach to micro-credentials and a proposal on individual learning accounts.*

*The target of 60% by 2030 requires a 62% increase in relation to the latest data available (37% in 2016), and a 27% increase on the reference level of 47% by 2025, as defined by the Council in its Resolution of February 2021.*

*As part of its European Skills Agenda, the Commission is further developing the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) launched in 2016, which has become the main instrument for actions promoting the development of entrepreneurial skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set. Moreover, the forthcoming action plan on social economy will include the promotion of entrepreneurial opportunities in such activities as supporting local communities and activating vulnerable groups, especially in the context of the COVID-19 recovery.*

*Other EU initiatives have been launched in the past weeks and months, such as the proposal for a Directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union, the proposal for a Directive on pay transparency to ensure equal pay for equal work, the Recommendation on effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis and the new Occupational safety and health strategic framework 2021-2027.*

*As part of the latter strategic framework, the Commission has committed to modernise the occupational safety and health legislative framework related to digitalisation by reviewing the Workplaces Directive and the Display Screen Equipment Directive by 2023. It invited the social partners to take action and update existing agreements at cross-industry and sectoral level to address new occupational safety and health issues related to the digital labour market, particularly psychosocial and ergonomic risks, by 2023.*

*The EU Rural action plan, presented with the Communication of 30 June 2021 on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas, outlines actions to foster territorial cohesion and create new opportunities, attract innovative businesses, provide access to quality jobs, promote new and improved skills, ensure better infrastructure and services, and leverage the role of sustainable agriculture and diversified economic activities.*

*Among the planned initiatives for the coming months and 2022 are the legislative initiative on platform work and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on minimum income.*

*With regard to education, the Commission's 2020 Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 proposes a set of policies and targets to be reached by 2030, one of which is to ensure that the share of people aged 20-24 with at least an upper secondary qualification reaches 90% and the share of 30-34 year-old with tertiary educational attainment equals at least 50%. To boost policy cooperation and exchange between the EU and Member States on education and training for the green transition, the Commission will also put forward a proposal for a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability and develop a European competence framework on climate change and sustainable development.*

*As to the international dimension stressed in the Opinion, the Commission intends to come forward with a Communication on decent work worldwide in the coming weeks. It will outline the commitment to stand up for workers' rights worldwide based on the EU's founding values to protect human rights and to promote sustainability; stress its support for multilateralism and a global level playing field of international labour standards that prevents a race to the bottom and supports responsibly acting states and companies all over the world.*

*The issues of childcare and the inclusion of older people in society and the labour market, emphasised in the Opinion, are of utmost importance in the context of the demographic transition and the Commission's Green Paper on Ageing. As one of the direct follow-ups to the Green Paper on Ageing and the Social Pillar Action Plan, the Commission will table in 2022 a European Care Strategy, addressing care in a comprehensive way, from childcare to long-term care in old age.*

*Many of the levers to implement the Social Pillar are, however, not in the hands of the Commission or the European Union. In line with the Porto Social Commitment and the Porto Declaration, action at all levels is required to reach the Action Plan's objectives, including by national, regional and local authorities as well as by social partners and civil society organisations.*

*The multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and NextGenerationEU provide EU financial support to carry out the ambitious reforms and investments needed to make our economies and societies more inclusive, resilient, green and digital. In particular, the Recovery and Resilience Facility can contribute to the implementation of the Social Pillar including through measures of effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis.*

*The Social Summit in Porto has conveyed a strong political signal of unity, solidarity and resolve about our path to a fair, sustainable and inclusive recovery, putting people at the centre.*

*The Commission counts on the continued commitment of Romania to strengthen Europe's social market economy and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Camera Deputaților in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*

*Nicolas Schmit  
Member of the Commission*