



# Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth

21 March 2016, Brussels

## Workshop 1: Active inclusion and inclusive labour markets

### *Description of the workshop*

In the context of today's increasingly knowledge-based economies and rising competition in a globalised environment, creating the supply-side conditions for employment growth will crucially depend on the ability of social protection systems to invest in the skills and competences of people at all ages and protect these investments at risky transitions during the life course. Insufficient or ineffective social policies risk manifesting in lower educational outcomes, overall lower skill development and a lower-quality and less-productive workforce. At the same time employment creation alone is often not sufficient to reduce poverty and social exclusion. There is a need to make labour markets more inclusive through further reforms, in particular by improving the efficiency of public employment services, the effectiveness of activation measures including linking activation and social assistance and enabling services so that everyone has a fair chance of entering employment and earning a living. There should be more attention to the different aspects of job quality, in particular pay and benefits, working conditions, work-life balance, health and safety, access to vocational education and training and lifelong learning, as well as to adequate coverage of social protection.

Delivering on the EU's objective of upward social convergence will therefore also require the provision of **adequate income support** to those in need, combined with **inclusive labour markets** and access to **activating and enabling services**.

The active inclusion strategy developed in 2008 by the European Commission is particularly well positioned to guide structural reforms in this direction. It has been complemented by many different documents emerging from the Commission in recent years, notably the Youth Guarantee, the Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed in the labour market.

The Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights adopted by the Commission on 8th March recognises that adequate and sustainable social protection is essential to ensure dignified living, protect against risks and enable individuals to participate fully in employment and society. It emphasises i.a. the importance of alignment between social services, social benefits and active support and of ensuring income security for those who lack sufficient resources.

Yet, many Member States are lacking a comprehensive active inclusion strategy. These countries can be



characterised by fragmented systems with medium to low coverage and low-generosity of income support, high labour market segmentation and low activation measures, low use of childcare, and low participation in education and training for the low-skilled.

## *Expected outcomes*

The workshop will gather views and get feedback of various stakeholders on best ways to include an active inclusion approach in building up the Pillar of Social Rights, notably with regard to the policy domains of equal opportunities and access to the labour market, and adequate and sustainable social protection. The workshop will discuss how to better enable integrated approaches in the delivery of active inclusion and how to better involve relevant stakeholders the implementation and monitoring of active inclusion strategies, including the follow-up on the Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed.

## *Panellists*

- **Rapporteur**

European Social Network: **Alfonso Montero**

- **Facilitator**

**Julie Arts**

The workshop will be organised entirely following a participatory approach, without formal speakers.

## *Questions*

**1:** What would be the most important aspects of the active inclusion principles to be reinforced or revised in the context of the Social Pillar with a view to establishing a truly comprehensive active inclusion strategy?

**2:** How to strengthen the activation component of social benefits and better link employment and social services with social protection schemes? For instance, could it be done through stricter conditionality (compulsory registration with employment services, signing of integration contract, participation in education, training and activation measures)?