



SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION PERFORMANCE MONITOR AND DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES

Annex 4. Relevant Council Conclusions (October 2015 – September 2016)

a) Council Conclusions on 'Social Governance for an Inclusive Europe'

On 7 December 2015, the Council adopted conclusions on social governance for an inclusive Europe¹, aimed at strengthening the social dimension of the European Semester so as to ensure a more balanced path towards sustainable and inclusive growth. The SPC was involved in the preparation of the Council Conclusions in close cooperation with the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council.

The Council conclusions provide specific indications for the way forward in terms of the governance of social and employment policies. An improved social governance and better coordination of economic, fiscal, employment and social policies represent an important contribution towards achieving the objectives of promoting a high level of employment, fighting social exclusion and guaranteeing adequate social protection.

The Council conclusions consider that the European Semester should be further enhanced through a more structured use of the already existing common instruments for monitoring social and employment developments, as well as through regular exchanges on progress towards the common social and employment objectives of the Union. A revamped European

¹ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14129-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

Semester would provide an adequate framework for the Member States to further pursue the implementation of necessary structural reforms in order to address social and employment challenges and to improve social and employment outcomes, taking into account the targets set in the Europe 2020 Strategy with regard to increasing employment and fighting poverty and social exclusion.

The Council conclusions call on the Member States to continue monitoring social and employment developments based on the existing commonly agreed instruments in the context of the social Open Method of Coordination, as well as to adequately respond to the Council recommendations in the area of employment and social policies. Furthermore, they encourage the SPC to work together with the Commission in order to ensure the monitoring of social and employment developments, in particular the progress towards the Europe 2020 targets on promoting employment and reducing poverty and social exclusion. The SPC and the Commission are also invited to further their cooperation for developing the European pillar of social rights as a follow-up to the Five Presidents' Report.

b) Council Conclusions on 'Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: an Integrated Approach'

On 16 June 2016, the Council adopted conclusions on 'Combating poverty and social exclusion: an integrated approach²'. These conclusions call on the Commission and the Member States to develop an integrated approach at all relevant policy levels to combat poverty and social exclusion by combining adequate income support, access to quality services and inclusive labour markets, while ensuring equal opportunities for women and men and addressing the different risks of poverty during the life cycle, from early childhood to old age. An integrated approach requires cooperation of stakeholders within all relevant public policy domains and across all required disciplines by connecting services between public parties, social partners, private partners, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the target groups. Cooperation should lead to a coordination of comprehensive and personalized, timely and continuous interventions aimed at the respective life domains. The Council conclusions invite the Commission to keep the prevention and fight against poverty high on the political agenda and to support Member States in delivering on their national EU2020 targets. The Council further encourages Member States to make better use of available European funding and instruments and calls upon all parties to strengthen the involvement of relevant stakeholders, such as social partners and civil society, throughout the policy process.

² <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9273-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

By adopting these conclusions, all Member States have shown a renewed commitment to increasing their efforts to reduce the number of people living at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Moreover, the Council invites the Commission to monitor the situation in the field of poverty and social exclusion in close cooperation with the Member States, while giving special consideration to innovative integrated approaches. The Council invites the Employment and Social Protection Committee to give special attention to the effectiveness of integrated approaches.

The Council conclusions are accompanied by an addendum³, which contains a collection of innovative best practices from all over Europe for integrated approaches to combat poverty and social exclusion. The best practices presented in the addendum illustrate the value of an integrated approach for different vulnerable groups, such as children, migrants, people with disabilities, elderly people, young people, the unemployed, people with a migrant background and homeless people.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15732&langId=en>