

# PORTO SOCIAL SUMMIT



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MAY 7<sup>TH</sup> 2021



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We, the subscribing institutions and organisations, have come together in Porto during the Social Summit to rally forces to strengthen the commitment to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and to use this unique opportunity to join forces for an inclusive, sustainable, just and jobs-rich recovery, based on a competitive economy and that leaves no one behind.

To this aim, we underline that:

- We are living unprecedented times. Our shared ambition for a transition towards a green, socially just and digital economy will shape the livelihoods of people across Europe for the decades to come, changing amongst others consumption, distribution, production, and working patterns. COVID-19 put a strain on our health systems and has exposed Europe to further far-reaching changes in our jobs, education, economy, welfare systems and social life, resulting in a profound economic and social crisis;
- The European response to COVID-19 contained many of the negative effects of the pandemic, showing the benefits of a coordinated European approach, which should continue guiding us in a joined effort to strive for solution-oriented actions while taking account of the diversity of national systems. It will continue to bring innovation, sustainable economic development, cohesion and upward economic and social convergence;
- With unemployment and inequalities increasing due to the pandemic, it is important to channel resources where they are most needed to strengthen our economies and to focus our policy efforts on equal opportunities, access to quality services, quality job creation, entrepreneurship, up- and reskilling and reducing poverty and exclusion;
- This is therefore the right moment to collectively assert and support an ambitious agenda of strong, sustainable and inclusive economic and social recovery and modernisation that goes hand in hand with strengthening the European Social Model, so that all people benefit from the green and digital transitions and live in dignity;
- The 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed in 2017 at the Gothenburg Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, remain a compass to guide us towards a strong, sustainable, inclusive recovery and towards upward economic and social convergence;
- In their Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, EU leaders have underlined that the Pillar needs to be implemented, turning its principles into action at Union and Member State level with due regard for the respective competences. In its resolutions on a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions and on the Child Guarantee, the European Parliament also strongly emphasised the need for a strong shared commitment to the materialisation of the Pillar rights and principles. In the debates developed by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions the relevance of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan was stressed.

In this context, we welcome the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan presented by the European

Commission and, using the most suitable instruments, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity and limiting the administrative burden on small and medium-sized companies, call all relevant actors to take on the learnings from this pandemic and to join efforts to:

- maintain emergency measures as long as necessary while promoting a strategic approach to facilitate the creation of new quality jobs and job-to-job transitions;
- mobilise all necessary resources - investments and reforms - to exit the economic and social crisis, to enhance Europe's resilience to future crises and to strengthen the competitiveness of the European economy, based on sustainable and inclusive growth, decent work and social justice, and paying particular attention to the environmental, digital and technological empowerment of workers, enterprises and institutions, with an emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises and services of general interest;
- support fair and sustainable competition in the Internal Market through innovation, quality jobs, decent wages, adequate working conditions, safe and healthy working places and environments, equal treatment and fair mobility;
- take measures to improve the functioning of labour markets so that they contribute to sustainable economic growth, international competitiveness, foster decent working conditions and fair pay for all, and promote the integration of women, young people and vulnerable categories in the labour market;
- take measures to reinforce national social protection systems to ensure a life with dignity for all while preserving their sustainability;
- pay special attention to the activities, communities and people most affected by the COVID19 crisis and its short, medium- and long-term consequences;
- reinforce territorial and social cohesion, with the involvement of the European, national, regional and local levels of government, namely focusing in sectors, groups and territories with deep and long-lasting structural weaknesses and undergoing rapid and major transformations, and support the reinforcement of essential services and infrastructures in this endeavor;
- promote autonomous social dialogue as a structuring component of the European Social Model and strengthen it at the European, national, regional, sectorial and company levels, with special emphasis on ensuring an enabling framework for collective bargaining within the various models that exist in the Member States;
- promote gender equality, including by closing the gender pay gap and guaranteeing the right to equal pay for work of equal value;
- develop public policies that, at the appropriate level, strengthen social cohesion, fight against all forms of discrimination, including in the world of work, and promote equal opportunities for all, particularly addressing children at risk of poverty, the elderly, people with disabilities, people with a migration background, disadvantaged and minority groups and the homeless;
- promote a comprehensive approach to lift children out poverty by prioritising funding for children's rights and by mainstreaming the child guarantee across all policy sectors while boosting investment in sustainable jobs and social support for their parents;
- promote civil dialogue and support the activities of civil society in the implementation of the Pillar principles.

We call on the European Council to endorse the 2030 headline targets proposed by the European Commission in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and to promote:

- the recovery of employment and quality job creation, as the keystone of economic and social development to achieve the target for 2030 of an employment rate of at least 78%, which implies at least halving the gender employment gap;
- investment in skills, lifelong learning and training responding to the economy's and society's needs, in order

to achieve the target, also by 2030, of at least 60% of Europeans participating annually in training and promoting access to basic digital skills for at least 80% of people aged 16-74, thus fostering skilling, reskilling, employability and innovation;

- adequate social inclusion and social protection policies to, by 2030, reduce the number of people living in poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million (compared to 2019 figures), including 5 million children and with particular emphasis on breaking the generational cycle of poverty as well as advancing social mobility.

We call on Member States to set ambitious national targets which, taking due account of the starting position of each country, constitute an adequate contribution to the achievement of the European targets.

We confirm that, in the framework of an economic and social governance of the EU, the European Semester and its different tools such as the renewed Social Scoreboard, are the appropriate policy framework to monitor progress in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and, on this basis, call for a regular assessment at the highest political level of progress towards the 2030 headline targets and upward convergence. The extraordinary resources made available to support Europe's recovery are a chance that cannot be missed to progress towards better implementation of the necessary reforms at the national level in line with the Social Pillar principles and goals.

Finally, we stress the importance of engaging and debating how to strengthen the social dimension of Europe with all citizens in the context of the Conference of the Future of Europe and beyond, involving the social partners and mobilizing the European society.

Porto, May 7<sup>th</sup> 2021

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THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS