

## The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan

The Action Plan published in March 2021 is the European Commission's contribution to the implementation of the Social Pillar principles, in light of the challenges arising from societal, technological, and economic developments. It sets out the following 3 EU-level targets to be achieved by 2030, which are at the same time in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

1. At least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030
2. At least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year
3. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million by 2030

### Implementing the principles of the Social Pillar

#### MORE AND BETTER JOBS

##### *1. Creating job opportunities in the real economy*

Preserving and creating new jobs is a priority for the EU, particularly because of the coronavirus crisis, which have costed some Europeans their livelihood and employment prospects. EU and national measures have significantly cushioned the negative impact of the pandemic, yet, as Europe moves from crisis response to recovery, more support to quality job creation is required to attain the 78% employment target.

As such the Commission presents a Recommendation for **Effective Active Support to Employment (EASE)** providing guidance on the combination of policy measures and available funding to promote job creation. Undoubtedly, cooperation with employment services and communication between social partners and stakeholders is of key importance to foster this proposed restructuring. The reinforced **Youth Guarantee** provides support to young people and the low skilled, who are more vulnerable to labour market fluctuations. It does so by focusing on quality offers that support a stable labour market integration. The Commission thus encourages Member States to implement the Youth Guarantee.

The Commission will also:

- Review the Council Recommendation on the Quality Framework for Traineeships in 2022

- Update the new Industrial Strategy for Europe to build on the 2020 Industrial strategy and on the lessons learned from COVID-19 in Q2 2021
- Adopt an Action Plan on the Social Economy in Q4 2021
- Evaluate the experience of the European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)

## 2. *Making work standards fit for the future of work*

Working conditions in the EU are among the best in the world but there are still certain challenges present:

- To address in-work poverty and inequality
- To ensure that jobs pay an adequate wage essential to guarantee adequate working and living conditions
- To overcome the blurring of traditional lines between a worker and a self-employed person
- To tackle issues related to surveillance, the use of data, and application of algorithmic management tools, emerging with the accelerated **digitalisation** process
- To assess the potential opportunities brought about by **telework**, which has become the norm for many due to COVID-19 and is likely to continue

The developments of digitalisation and telework, which have raised a number of challenges, warrant a wide EU-level policy debate with all stakeholders, most notably social partners. In January 2021, the Parliament adopted a Resolution based on the legislative own-initiative report on the right to disconnect, calling on the Commission to work on promoting conditions that enable workers to exercise this right. The Commission invites social partners to follow up on their **Autonomous Framework Agreement** on Digitalisation to explore measures to ensure fair telework measures to ensure that all workers can have a right to disconnect.

The Commission will:

- Present a legislative proposal on the working conditions of platform workers in Q4 2021
- Put forward an initiative to ensure that EU competition law does not interfere with collective agreements for self-employed in Q4 2021
- Propose an EU regulation on Artificial Intelligence (following the White Paper) for the uptake of AI use
- Present a report on the implementation of the Working Time Directive in 2022
- Ensure an appropriate follow-up to the European Parliament Resolution with recommendations to the Commission on the right to disconnect

## 3. *Occupational safety and health standards for a new world of work*

Improving occupational safety and health standards is important to protect workers' overall safety and health and at the same time to uphold labour productivity. An update of the Union's occupational safety and health strategic framework is required due to the rapid technological and societal change, and COVID-19 has further underlined that adequate health and safety measures are indispensable.

The Commission will:

- Present a new Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework 2021-27 in Q2 2021
- Present proposals to further reduce workers' exposure to hazardous chemicals in 2022

#### *4. Labour mobility*

Labour mobility is at the heart of the European project and one of the pillars of the EU's Single Market. The Commission strives to protect and improve their rights and working conditions to make labour mobility work, which is critical for a well-functioning internal market. Thus, the Commission proposes the need for a **revision of the Temporary Agency Directive** and encourages the Parliament and the Council to conclude negotiations on the revision of social security coordination rules.

## SKILLS AND EQUALITY

### *1. Investing in skills and education to unlock new opportunities for all*

A skilled workforce is the motor of a prosperous green and digital economy, powered by innovative ideas and products, and technological developments. The green and digital transitions thus further amplify the need for continuous investment in education and training systems.

To reach the 2030 skill target of 60% of adults participating in learning every year, sustained public and private investment is needed to facilitate access to training for people of working age. Moreover, the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF), as illustrated in the 'reskill and upskill' legislative flagship, the Commission Recommendation on EASE presented with this Action Plan and the Pact for Skills launched in November 2020, have the potential to facilitate investment and reforms in this area.

The Commission will:

- Propose in Q4 2021 a Transformation Agenda for Higher Education to unlock the full potential of higher education institutions for a recovery

- Propose in Q4 2021 an initiative on Individual Learning Accounts to overcome barriers to access to training and to encourage career transitions
- Propose in Q4 2021 a European approach to micro-credentials to facilitate flexible learning pathways and labour market transitions
- Propose in Q4 2021 a Skills and Talent package

## 2. *Building a Union of equality*

Efforts to combat gender-based stereotypes and discrimination are central to the EU's agenda. Alongside this Action Plan, the Commission is proposing an **Equal Treatment Directive** to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency measures and enforcement mechanisms.

Adequate work-life balance policies facilitate conciliation of work and private life. In line with the Work-Life Balance Directive, the EU will continue to promote equal sharing of care and work responsibilities.

The Commission will:

- Publish in Q1 2021 a joint report on the application of the Employment Equality Directive and the Racial Equality Directive
- Present in 2022 a revision of the Barcelona targets on early childhood education and care
- Propose in Q4 2021 legislation to combat gender-based violence against women

## The Way Forward

The European Pillar of Social Rights has significantly boosted the EU's social credentials. This Action Plan presents the most important EU-level actions that need to be taken to ensure the best implementation of the Pillar. In so doing, a stronger Social Europe is achieved in which EU citizens have full enjoyment of their fundamental social rights outlined in the Pillar. The Commission will look to call on the Member States, social partners, and other relevant actors like regional and local authorities as well as civil society organisations to put the high social standards reflected in the Pillar at the centre of their investments and reforms.

The Plan presents the Commission's contribution to the Porto Social Summit, organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, in May 2021. The Summit will focus on strengthening Europe's social dimension, and it will be an occasion to renew, at the highest political level, the commitment to implement the Social Pillar. The Commission will review the Action Plan in 2025, and step-up EU efforts as needed with a view to achieve the 2030 EU targets.

*The full text of the Commission Communication can be found in the link below:*

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en)

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