



## Commission presents the European Pillar of Social Rights

Brussels, 26 April 2017

### **Building a fairer Europe and strengthening its social dimension is a key priority for this Commission.**

Today, it delivers on its promise to adopt its proposal for the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar sets out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. The Pillar is designed as a compass for a renewed process of upward convergence towards better working and living conditions in Europe. It is primarily conceived for the euro area but applicable to all EU Member States wishing to be part of it.

President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, said: *"As Commission President, I have been seeking to put social priorities at the heart of Europe's work, where they belong. With the European Pillar of Social Rights and the first set of initiatives that accompany it, we are delivering on our promises and we are opening a new chapter. We want to write this chapter together: Member States, EU institutions, the social partners and civil society all have to take on their responsibility. I would like to see the Pillar endorsed at the highest political level before the end of this year."*

The Pillar was prepared by the Commission, under the leadership of Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Thyssen, in close consultation with stakeholders at all levels. It reaffirms rights that are already present in the EU and international legal acquis and complements them to take account of new realities. The [principles and rights](#) enshrined in the Pillar are structured around three categories: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. They place the focus on how to tackle new developments in the world of work and society at large so as to deliver on the promise of the Treaties of a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress.

Delivering on the principles and rights defined in the European Pillar of Social Rights is a joint responsibility of Member States, EU institutions social partners and other stakeholders. The European institutions will help to set the framework and lead the way forward for the implementation of the Pillar, in full respect of Member States' competences and social dialogue traditions. A number of principles and rights included in the Pillar will require further legislative initiatives to become effective. Where needed, existing EU law will be updated, complemented and better enforced.

Already today, the European Commission flanks the European Pillar of Social Rights with a number of further [concrete legislative and non-legislative initiatives](#) such as on the work-life balance of parents and carers, on the information of workers, and on access to social protection and on working time. These initiatives illustrate both the nature of the issues covered by the Pillar as well as the way in which its principles and rights can be implemented.

A [social scoreboard](#) is also established to track trends and performances across EU countries in 12 areas and to assess progress towards a social "triple A" for the EU as a whole. This analysis will feed into the [European Semester of economic policy coordination](#).

Delivering on the Pillar's principles and rights is a dynamic process. The Pillar will inspire the work done in the context of the European Semester and on the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union, in line with the [Five Presidents' Report](#). In particular, the Pillar should serve to re-start the process of convergence within the EMU and some of the principles and rights could act as guidance towards more binding standards for the euro area. Further EU legislative or non-legislative initiatives may follow in the future as part of the annual [Commission Work Programmes](#). The European funds, in particularly the European Social Fund, will also provide financial support to implement many key aspects of the Pillar.

### **Next Steps**

The Pillar is presented today under two legal forms with identical content: as a Commission Recommendation, effective as of today, and as a proposal for a joint proclamation by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission. On this basis, the Commission will now enter into discussions with the European Parliament and the Council to work towards broad political support and high-level endorsement of the Pillar.

### **Background**

The EU is home to the most advanced welfare systems in the world and to a wealth of best practices and social innovations, but it needs to confront and adapt to unprecedented societal challenges. Although economic and social conditions across Europe have improved and employment has never been as high, the aftermath of the crisis of the last decade is still far-reaching, from long-term and youth unemployment to risks of poverty in many parts of Europe. At the same time, the world of work and our societies are changing fast, with new opportunities and new challenges arising from globalisation, the digital revolution, changing work patterns and demographic developments. All levels of public authorities, social partners and civil society share a responsibility and an interest in working for a more prosperous and future-proof Europe, where economic and social developments go hand in hand.

The Juncker Commission made a social Europe one of its priorities from the very start, as reflected in its [Political Guidelines of July 2014](#). In September 2015, on the occasion of President Juncker's first State of the Union, he said: *"We have to step up the work for a fair and truly pan-European labour market. (...) As part of these efforts, I will want to develop a European Pillar of Social Rights, which takes account of the changing realities of Europe's societies and the world of work."*

Since this announcement, the Commission has engaged actively with Member States, EU institutions, social partners, civil society and citizens on the content and role of the Pillar. In March 2016, the Commission presented a [preliminary outline of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#), and launched a [broad public consultation](#) to gather feedback, which concluded in January 2017 with a high-level conference.

Building on the input received during the consultation, the Commission now puts forward its proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights, which is about delivering new and more effective rights for citizens. The Pillar takes direct inspiration from the richness of the practices across Europe, and builds on the strong body of law which exists at EU and international level.

#### **For more information**

[MEMO: The European Pillar of Social Rights – Questions and Answers](#)

[Factsheet: European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Commission Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Further information on the 20 principles and rights under the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Report following the public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Factsheet: Social Scoreboard](#)

[Brochure: Social Scoreboard 2017](#)

[Social Scoreboard online tool](#)

[Website on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Press release: Delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Reflection paper on the social dimension of the future of the EU](#)

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