

## Advancing the European Union's Social Dimension

*Resolution submitted by: Political Commission 2 – Internal European Affairs*

While the social dimension of the EU has been expanded in the last few years, the current situation is still lacking in many areas. The COVID-19 crisis only served to further highlight the weaknesses of the current system. With the legislative competences in the social and employment fields remaining largely in the hands of Member States, a European legal framework able to ensure decent working and living conditions and adequate social protection to all is urgently needed.

**JEF Europe,**

- *Recognising* the need to build a common European social policy able to lead to a common economic plan for sustainable development and social welfare in Europe;
- *Recognising* that such a common European social policy needs to be financed through a larger federal European budget raised through genuine own resources rather than national contributions;
- *Alarmed* by the persistence of horizontal and vertical inequalities – aggravated by the previous and future economic crises – among European citizens and Member States;
- *Deeply concerned* about growing and persisting income inequalities, along with employment gaps between men and women and difficulties for more vulnerable groups, such as older workers, migrants and people with disabilities;
- *Noting with concern* the levels of absolute and relative poverty, which affects one-tenth and one-fourth of Europeans respectively<sup>1</sup>;
- *Emphasising* the difficulties that young people face in entering the labour market and in benefiting from forms of social protection, especially following the COVID-19 health crisis, and consequent economic downturn;
- *Recalling* the resolution “For a coordinated EU response to tackle the COVID-19 health emergency”;
- *Taking into consideration* the growing flexibility of employment in the EU labour market, which fosters job creation but has also made employment more precarious, and has spread “non-standard” forms of employment which have contributed to the erosion of forms of workers’ protection normally guaranteed with traditional forms of labour;

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<sup>1</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Europe\\_2020\\_indicators\\_-\\_poverty\\_and\\_social\\_exclusion](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Europe_2020_indicators_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion)

- *Emphasising* the importance of the Schengen Agreement in relation to the job security of cross-border workers, migrant workers, posted workers and other kind of persons working outside of their place of residence;
- *Recognising* the worrying connection between climate change and the increase in social inequality;
- *Underlining* the need for strong federal institutions on the European level in order to manage supranational challenges;
- *Hopeful* about the reinforced attention to the social dimension shown by the joint proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- *Concerned* by the persisting institutional barriers which leave the process of legislative convergence on social issues as an exclusive competence of Member States, with no regulatory powers on the States that are not fulfilling their responsibilities;
- *Noting* further an evident disparity between economic governance, where sanctions are clearly provided, and social governance where there is no binding legislation;
- *Observing with concern* the restricted conditions of an international right to strike;
- *Recognising* the need of equitably distributed prosperity, with appropriate measures of employment protection and welfare, as a fundamental condition to relaunch the European project with the support of European citizens;
- *Welcoming* the establishment of the European Labour Authority, while regretting its narrow mandate (as amended by the Council);

### **JEF Europe therefore,**

1. *Asks for* a binding European framework of social rights as a first step towards a European welfare state and as an essential element of an integrated European labour market, given that integrated economies and increased labour mobility also call for coordinated forms of social protection;
2. *Requests* further investment in human development through strengthening the budgetary capacity of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), with particular focus on young people that are unemployed or just entering the labour market, through a reinforced Youth Employment Initiative;
3. *Calls for* the aforementioned Youth Employment Initiative to guarantee the presence of insurance against unemployment and social shock absorbers, equal working conditions, adequate balance between rights and duties of workers and employers and between flexibility and social security;
4. *Calls upon* the aforementioned Youth Employment Initiative to be able to formulate appropriate policies against absolute poverty, relative poverty and in-work poverty;
5. *Demands* guarantees for the compensation of young people starting their careers through internship and traineeships, thus favouring social mobility and improved career possibilities for the lower-income population;
6. *Requests* the creation of a European status for interns and trainees guaranteeing a minimum standard of rights concerning working conditions;

7. *Underlines* the importance of aid for people in need of monetary benefits, voluntary training services and social inclusion programmes to support the transition period from unemployment to employment refusing coercive forms of work;
8. *Urges* the Commission to build upon the SURE (the European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency), towards the establishment of a permanent European unemployment (re)insurance scheme, whose twin objectives would be to stabilise the economic cycle, as well as improving workers' social protection;
9. *Encourages* harmonisation of working standards throughout the Union, according to the principle of "same pay for the same work at the same place";
10. *Supports* the creation of a framework for adequate and decent wages, fully respecting collective agreements and bargaining or through statutory minimum wages;
11. *Calls for* a minimum age to be set for physically demanding jobs and to ensure special protection for young workers;
12. Stresses the importance of minimum requirements for occupational safety and health, as well as a basic level of medical care at their workplace;
13. *Recommends* the creation of a legislative framework which requires employers to ensure the health and medical fitness of workers at their workplaces;
14. *Urges* Member States to engage in enhanced cooperation on social issues or social compacts, following the example of the Schengen agreements, in order to achieve better integration among those countries with similar social standards and avoid the risk of social dumping;
15. *Demands* the European Commission and the Member States to recognise the limits of the current system based on peer review and exchange of best practices and to set binding laws and sanctions for the States that are not fulfilling their responsibilities in terms of social protection;
16. *Demands* that the European Social Pillar become the core structure of a federal social union with proper resources, democratic instruments, and concrete tools for its implementation;
17. *Calls for* a European welfare state financed with an enlarged European budget independent from Member State contributions, funded by substantial and genuine own resources, based on an EU-wide system of taxation;
18. *Requests*, further, that a sufficient level of protection for workers be ensured across the Union, by consistently enforcing existing European laws, and - when necessary - improving the coherence and effectiveness of the European legal framework on social matters, in particular when it concerns multinationals and cross-border businesses;
19. *Encourages* the development of Europe-wide trade unions in order to become a true bargaining power and to establish adequate instruments for the protection of workers in an ever more globalised world where the transnational dimension of business is on the rise;
20. *Requests* the European Labour Authority to be given a full mandate to ensure correct application of European labour law and to fight against fraud and abuse by applying sanctions on Member States in case of a failure to comply with their obligations.