



## The European Pillar of Social Rights: turning principles into actions

Brussels, 4 March 2021

Today the Commission sets out its ambition for a strong Social Europe that focuses on jobs and skills for the future and paves the way for a fair, inclusive and resilient socio-economic recovery. The **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan** outlines concrete actions to further implement the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights as a joint effort by the Member States and the EU, with an active involvement of social partners and civil society. It also proposes employment, skills and social protection headline targets for the EU to be achieved by 2030.

This is an opportunity for Europe to update its social rulebook, while successfully navigating the transformations brought about by new societal, technological and economic developments and by the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. The Commission has already started to put the Pillar's principles into action, proposing initiatives such as Youth Employment Support and Adequate Minimum Wages in 2020. Today the Commission is also presenting a Commission Recommendation on **Effective Active Support to Employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE)**, to support a job-rich recovery.

Executive Vice-President for An Economy that Works for People, Valdis **Dombrovskis**, said: "*Our economic recovery must be inclusive, fair and job-rich. That is why the Commission is proposing an ambitious agenda for implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and inviting Member States to actively support employment in the recovery phase following the COVID-19 crisis. With this, we want to signal the importance of a gradual transition from emergency to recovery policies for our labour markets, which the EU will support through its available funding sources - including the ESF+ and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.*"

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas **Schmit**, said: "*The European Pillar of Social Rights has been our reference point for building a strong social Europe. Now we breathe new life into it, turning its principles into actions. Creating jobs is one of our main priorities, and making sure people have the right skills for those jobs. This is the objective of EASE. We also have a collective duty to combat poverty in the EU and create an inclusive society. We all have a role to play. I look forward to a renewed commitment to social rights at the Social Summit in May.*"

### EU targets for a common ambition by 2030

The Action Plan sets **three headline targets** for the EU to be achieved by 2030:

1. **At least 78%** of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment.
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**.

The new 2030 headline targets are consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and set the common ambition for a strong Social Europe. Together with a **revised Social Scoreboard**, they will allow the Commission to monitor Member States' progress under the European Semester. The Commission invites the European Council to endorse these three targets and calls on Member States to define their own national targets to contribute to this effort.

### Providing Effective Active Support to Employment (EASE)

As a concrete action under Principle 4 of the Pillar, the Commission today presents a Recommendation on **Effective Active Support to Employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE)**. With this Recommendation, the Commission provides concrete guidance to Member States on policy measures, backed by EU funding possibilities, to gradually transition between emergency measures taken to preserve jobs in the current crisis and new measures needed for a job-rich recovery. The Recommendation promotes job creation and job-to-job transitions from declining sectors towards expanding sectors, notably the digital and green ones. These new measures should contain three elements: (1) hiring incentives and entrepreneurial support; (2) upskilling and

reskilling opportunities; (3) enhanced support by employment services. EU funds, including from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the European Social Fund Plus, are available to help Member States finance their EASE measures.

## Background

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the **European Pillar of Social Rights** in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit. The Pillar sets out 20 key principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Pillar is structured around three chapters: (1) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; (2) Fair working conditions; (3) Social protection and inclusion.

The Commission has already presented several actions deriving from the Pillar, such as the European Skills Agenda (Principle 1), the Gender Equality Strategy (Principle 2), the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (Principle 3), a Youth Employment Support package (Principle 4) and a proposal for a Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages (Principle 6).

In the same week as the Pillar Action Plan, the Commission is adopting a proposal for a Directive on Pay Transparency (Principle 2) and a new Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2030 (Principle 17). More upcoming EU actions in 2021 will include, among others, the European Child Guarantee (Principle 11), a new Occupational Safety and Health strategic framework (Principle 10), an initiative to improve the working conditions for people working through digital platforms (Principles 5 and 12), and an Action Plan for the Social Economy.

The new impetus on social rights will use and reinforce the momentum created by the ambitious €1.8 trillion EU long-term budget and NextGenerationEU recovery instrument. They will provide EU funding opportunities to Member States to support a strong Social Europe. This includes support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility to fund coherent packages of reforms and investments that respond to the labour market, skills and social challenges identified in the country-specific recommendations of the European Semester.

The **Porto Social Summit**, organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU in May 2021, will focus on how to strengthen Europe's social dimension to meet the challenges of a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery, and the green and digital transition. The Summit will be an occasion to rally forces to renew, at the highest political level, the commitment to implement the Social Pillar. The Pillar Action Plan constitutes the Commission's contribution to the Porto Social Summit.

The Pillar Action Plan builds on a broad **public consultation** with more than 1000 written contributions from Member States, EU institutions and bodies, regions, cities, social partners, civil society organisations, international organisations, think tanks and citizens. In addition, the Commission held dedicated webinars with over 1500 individual stakeholders.

## For More Information

[Questions and Answers: the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Questions and Answers: Commission Recommendation on Effective Active Support to Employment following the Covid-19 crisis \(EASE\)](#)

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

[Factsheet: Effective Active Support to Employment \(EASE\)](#)

[Communication: European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Staff Working Document accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Commission Recommendation on an effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis \(EASE\)](#)

[Eurobarometer Report on social issues](#)

[European Pillar of Social Rights website](#)

[Latest information on the Action Plan](#)

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