



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

ETUC key messages in view of La Hulpe High-Level Interinstitutional Conference

The ETUC is convinced that, for a full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, a plural approach is needed to improve living and working conditions in EU:

- Implementation, enforcement and monitoring of existing initiatives, together with the financial support (EU funds) designed to support policies and programmes that directly contribute to the realisation of the EPSR's objectives;
- Put forward new EU legislative and non-legislative initiatives to address the social challenges facing Europe;
- The role of the EPSR in the European Semester process, as key component of the EU's socio-economic governance framework.

As for the financial rules governing the use of EU funds, we believe it is fundamental to have **strong social conditionality** to promote quality jobs, collective bargaining, improved working conditions, quality training. In this context, we believe times are ripe also for revising **EU public procurement** rules to ensure that public money goes to organisations (and their subcontractors) that respect workers' and trade union rights, that negotiate with trade unions and whose workers are covered by collective agreements.

Regarding **new initiatives**, here some of the (non-exhaustive) ETUC priorities for the next EU social agenda:

- Tackling precarious work and ensuring quality jobs. Banning on-demand and zero-hours type contracts, and other arrangements and forms of precarious work, making permanent contracts the standard, with attention to workers employed in new forms of work and in the digital economy/platforms. Ensuring quality jobs and improving working conditions is key also to address labour shortages. The best way to ensure job quality and fair working conditions is by promoting and strengthening collective bargaining.
- Promoting skills development and adult learning. We need to make sure the EU takes action to guarantee the right of all to high quality and inclusive lifelong training, without costs for the workers and during working time. We call for a possible EU-wide "right to training" to incentivise workers to engage in training, also linked to a proposal for a "European Job Guarantee" to support local job creation for those in need of support to find job opportunities.
- Skills development is framed also in the context of just transition. We need an initiative on Just Transition in the world of work through anticipation and management of change, based on the principles of trade union involvement and collective bargaining.
- Ensuring the effective regulation of AI in the workplace, by enshrining the "human in control" principle in EU legislation.
- Committing to achieving zero deaths at the workplace and because of work. Improving and expanding the EU occupational health and safety legislation and other European initiatives to achieve this objective. Preventing psychosocial risks and online harassment at work through a European Directive. Additionally, it is crucial to adapt the European legislative framework concerning occupational safety and health to safeguard workers from the emerging risks associated with climate change, as well as the corresponding adaptation and mitigation



strategies. Introducing EU legislation that establishes temperature limits for work, outdoor and indoor. To prevent risks of mental health, it is also crucial to put forward as soon as possible a Directive on telework and the right to disconnect, in order to ensure adequate working conditions for people on telework and a better work-life balance for all workers.

- The Coordination of Social Security Regulation must be updated and agreed among MS, to ensure that social protection systems in the EU are better designed to complement the changing world of work. This requires greater cooperation between member states to develop portable social security rights and systems that can allow cross-border workers to contribute to and access social benefits seamlessly across EU borders.
- Building on the positive experience of SURE, establishing a permanent EU unemployment insurance system to be activated in case of new crises or to support Member States in facilitating labour reallocation in the context of the green and digital transitions, also with a common approach to active labour market policies.
- Other initiatives: improving the enforcement of labour mobility rules by a more effective European Labour Authority (ELA); revise the EWC directive; revise the Directive on Information and Consultation of workers; fair and right-based approach to migration and asylum; a directive to define common EU standards for minimum income schemes to cope with the anti-poverty strategy, in view of achieving the Porto Headline Target on Poverty reduction.

As for the **Governance**, integrating the EPSR in the EU Economic Governance, building on article 148 TFEU, to rebalance macroeconomic boundaries. It is key to ensure the necessary fiscal space for MSs to finance the investments for a fair twin transition and to invest in social policies implementing the EPSR and achieving the Porto's Targets by 2030.

The work on the Social Convergence Framework (SCF) during the current EU-term has been a major step forward in order to anchor the social domain better in the European Semester, to better monitor social imbalances within the EU and to foster upward convergence. It continues the process of “socialisation” of the European Semester and fiscal rules, giving a legal/operative leg and more relevance to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Nevertheless, it must be enshrined in the EU economic governance architecture.