social**platform**

EMPL Hearing – Europe 2020 Strategy

Barbara Helfferich – Vice President

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socialplatform

Our members

Our three recommendations

Ensuring consistency of policies and transparent processes

- *Review the architecture of Europe 2020 and the Semester process to ensure the policies and actions implemented under the strategy are consistent with all its objectives, and to ensure its legitimacy through more transparency.*

Ensuring progress on the social targets

- *Reduce poverty and social exclusion, inequalities and unemployment, increase quality employment and improve educational attainment under Europe 2020, in order to put the well-being of all people back at the centre of the strategy.*

Ensuring meaningful and structured stakeholder involvement

- *Open up the decision making processes to social NGOs ready to play their role in their areas of expertise, in developing policies and in the implementation of the economic and social priorities of the EU.*

I. Ensure consistency of policies and transparent processes

- **What we see**: consistency between policies in the economic field and in the social field is completely missing. Very often they contradict each other with economic priorities winning at the expense of social priorities.

What we recommend (1/2)

- **Perform an ex-ante coordination of fiscal, economic and social EU policies, actions and recommendations** put forward throughout the European Semester and in particular in the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) and Country-specific Recommendations (CSR).

- **Include concrete actions and recommendations on all headline targets** in the AGS and CSRs and provide CSRs for all member states, including those under troika supervision. Ensure that policies implemented to reach one of the targets of Europe 2020 are not detrimental to another, to prevent for example employment reforms resulting in increased in-work poverty.

- **Set up a framework for mainstreaming equality and fundamental rights objectives**, including gender equality, throughout the Europe 2020 Strategy and European Semester, to ensure the strategy takes a rights based approach.

What we recommend (2/2)

- **Provide an annual Progress Report** on the implementation of Europe 2020 and all headline targets. Draw upon the Joint Assessment Framework, the Employment Performance Monitor and the Social Protection Performance Monitor. Include information on how fundamental rights and equality, including gender equality, as well as the wellbeing of people were impacted.

- **Complement the Scoreboard of Employment and Social Indicators with a system that triggers preventive and corrective actions** once the indicators in the scoreboard reach a certain value. This should help to ensure social concerns do not impact EU policies less than financial and economic concerns. Furthermore, the indicators should be reviewed and extended with other relevant social indicators, for example on extreme forms of poverty and exclusion.

II. Ensure progress on the social targets

- **What we see:** Economic priorities are still reigning at the top of the European agenda at the expense of social priorities.

- It is urgently needed to reinvigorate the inclusive growth pillar of the Strategy. There can be no question of dropping the target to reduce poverty and social exclusion. This would render the inclusive pillar meaningless.

What we recommend (1/2)

- **Develop comprehensive action plans identifying the different steps and actions** that need to be taken to address all social headline targets of Europe 2020. Set out a roadmap for implementing the action plans linking into the European Semester processes and with a timeline from now until 2020 including intermediate benchmarks.

- **Put forward CSRs on fighting poverty and social inclusion for all member states** and make sure they properly reflect the social reality in each member state, including by taking into account assessments of national civil society organisations (CSOs).

- **Assess how member states have followed up on the CSRs** in the fields of poverty and social exclusion, education, health and employment, publish the outcomes and take action in case of non-implementation.

- **Adopt a concrete work plan to operationalise the Social Investment Package** (SIP) with specific work streams on key priorities such as confronting homelessness, active inclusion, investing in children, adequacy of universal social protection systems and in-work poverty.

What we recommend (2/2)

- **Adopt an EU Framework Directive on Adequate Minimum Income** that establishes common principles, definitions and methods, to achieve a level playing field across Europe, and use the European Semester to monitor its implementation.

- **Break down the social targets by population, age and gender** (i.e. women, younger people, older people, people with a disability, migrants) and set annual objectives for job creation and inclusion.

- **Develop further tools to implement the Agenda for new skills and jobs as part of a coherent action plan that includes a stronger focus on ensuring the quality and sustainability of jobs.** Include actions to improve the accessibility of the labour market for all people that can work as well as actions for job creation aiming for strategic investment in the social, health and care sector.

- **Include measures on ensuring adequate social protection and the quality of jobs** when putting forward proposals and recommendations promoting mobility of people.

- **Monitor the implementation of the Youth Guarantee** and explore ways of providing additional funding, and step-up efforts to guarantee the quality of internships and the rights of interns, as a stepping stone towards permanent quality jobs.

- **Address the long-term social impact of pension reforms**, i.e. the ongoing shifts from defined-benefit to defined-contribution pension plans and from statutory pay-as-you-go to funded schemes, to support member states in improving gender equality at all ages.

III. Ensure meaningful and structured stakeholder involvement

- **What we see:** the involvement of civil society in the processes of the European Semester is disappointing. EU institutions and member states hardly want to consult – or if they do consult it is a poorly designed process lacking in quality engagement.

What we recommend (1/2)

- **Adopt clear and transparent procedures for civil dialogue, similar to the ones on social dialogue,** which allow for structural, timely and meaningful involvement of the full range of EU-level stakeholders. Ensure such a framework fosters involvement in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies under Europe 2020 as well as in developing a genuine EMU when it is linked to the European Semester.

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- **Expand your sources of information** when developing the AGSs and CSRs as well as the preparatory Staff Working Papers by seeking information from social NGOs.

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- **Take into account the alternative CSRs produced by social NGOs** on the basis of the input of their member organisations and target groups.

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What we recommend (2/2)

- **Include social NGOs in the framework of the Innovation Union** for the development of proposals and recommendations, in particular when it concerns social innovation.

- **Provide guidance on civil dialogue to the member states**, in particular in the context of the NRPs.

- **Set up a framework for shadow reporting by CSOs**, similar to what already exists within the UN for monitoring the implementation of the UNCRPD and CEDAW Convention.

- **Organise the Stakeholder Dialogue under the EPAP in a more structured and regular way** to further develop, implement and monitor this flagship initiative. This includes involving participants in setting the agendas of the meetings and informing them about the dates of the meetings and sending out the agenda well in advance.

- For example Social Platform's Position on social innovation of December 2013, provides useful recommendations on how to promote social innovation in the EU.

Our contact information

Square de Meeûs 18
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium
T +32 2 511 37 14

platform@socialplatform.org
www.socialplatform.org

Facebook: facebook.com/socialplatform

Twitter: @social_platform