

## Employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy

The employment and social dimension of European integration is a key element of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which aims at ensuring 'inclusive growth'. Four years after its launch, the European Commission has begun a review of this strategy. The European Parliament, for its part, is preparing a resolution on the employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy.

### The employment and social dimension of the EU's 2020 strategy

In 2010, with the [Europe 2020 strategy](#), the European Union (EU) set up a comprehensive policy agenda for the following decade aimed at improving the EU's competitiveness while strengthening the social dimension of its economy. The strategy defines five headline targets, of which three are related to employment and social policies at EU level: (1) raising the employment rate to ensure that 75% of 20-64 year-olds are in employment; (2) lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty, or the risk of poverty and social exclusion; (3) reducing early school leaving and ensuring that at least 40% of 30-34 year-olds complete tertiary education. These objectives are complemented by national targets for each Member State. Since 2011, these programmes are reviewed annually at EU level through the [European Semester](#). The crisis has highlighted the importance of labour markets, welfare systems and social inclusion in strengthening socio-economic policies, and made the need for reinforcement of the social dimension of the new EU 'economic governance' evident. In [October 2013](#), the European Commission (EC) proposed a new early-warning tool – [the scoreboard of key employment and social indicators](#) – to ensure better integration of employment and social policies into the European Semester, and this has been implemented as from the 2014 cycle.

### Where does the employment and social EU stand four years on?

After four years, the Commission proposed to review the Europe 2020 strategy, adopting a Communication, '[Taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth](#)', on 5 March 2014. The communication's preliminary conclusion from the first years of the strategy's implementation is that progress towards the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy has been mixed. Taking into account the latest trends, the EU is on course to meet or come close to its [targets](#) on education (Early leavers from education and training in 2013: 12.0% / target 10%; Tertiary educational attainment: 36.9% / target 40%). Nevertheless progress is uneven on employment (employment rate in 2013: 68.4% / target 75%) and poor on poverty reduction (People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013: 122.6 million / target 96.4 million). Moreover, growing [inequalities](#) in the distribution of wealth and income, and increasing [disparities](#) between Member States' social and employment situations are noticeable.

### European Parliament

The Parliament has always played an active role in formulating social and employment policy to fight against unemployment and promote better social conditions. Through its resolutions '[Towards a Genuine Economic and Monetary Union](#)' and '[Strengthening the Social Dimension of EMU](#)', Parliament actively contributed to the debate on the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. It has continually stressed the need to integrate social and employment objectives into the European Semester properly, by broadening the social indicators and making them binding. It has also reiterated its desire to see its decision-making role in this process expanded. Since the start of the eighth term, the Employment Committee has been preparing a [motion for resolution](#) and oral questions to the [Commission](#) and the [Council](#) on the employment and social aspects of the EU2020 strategy, with the aim of rekindling the debate and putting employment and social considerations on equal footing with macroeconomic ones. Members should vote on the resolution after debate on the answers from the other institutions during the November plenary session.