Question for written answer E-007426/16
to the Commission
Javi López (S&D)
(30 September 2016)

Subject: Introducing a basic income in Europe

In the light of the pilot projects being carried out in various Member States such as Finland and the Netherlands, aimed at designing and implementing an unconditional basic income that would ensure that all citizens received enough money to live on, and in the context of the creation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the goal of achieving what President Juncker has called a ‘Social Triple A’ rating in Europe:

1. What is the Commission’s view on the introduction of this kind of instrument in the Member States as part of the fight against poverty?

2. What opportunities and threats does the Commission see in this regard?

3. Will the Commission promote the introduction of a basic income as part of the practices and policies recommended in the proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights?

Answer given by Ms Thyssen on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2016)

The Commission is aware of the pilot projects on basic income carried out in Finland and the Netherlands. These two projects do not meet all the characteristics typically associated with unconditional basic income schemes: the scope of the Finnish experiment has been targeted to people who currently receive unemployment benefits; as for the Dutch initiative, it covers a few hundreds citizens currently receiving benefits.

Both pilots are still in a preliminary phase and the evaluations of the results are foreseen in a few years’ time. The Commission services follow these and other experiments with income support including minimum income schemes and assess the opportunities and threats that such schemes can offer.

The Commission also follows the international debate on basic income schemes with great interest.