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REPORT

on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty
(2019/2188(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty (2019/2188(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to the objective of cohesion established under Article 3 of the TEU, in particular upward social convergence,
- having regard to the horizontal social clause contained in Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to social policy pursuant to Article 151 et seq. of the TFEU,
- having regard to the revised European Social Charter,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as referred to in Article 6 of the TEU,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights and, in particular, principles 5 and 6,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and recommendations,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), and to its entry into force in the European Union on 21 January 2011 in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC of 26 November 2009 on the conclusion, by the European Community, of the UN CRPD¹,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation²,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin³,
- having regard to Ursula von der Leyen's political guidelines,
- having regard to the Commission's adjusted work programme for 2020,

¹ OJ L 23, 27.1.2010, p. 35.

² OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

³ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

- having regard to the poverty and social exclusion target set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy,
- having regard to the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 October 2008 on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on European protection of cross-border and seasonal workers in the context of the COVID-19 crisis⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 November 2015 on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 January 2014 on effective labour inspections as a strategy to improve working conditions in Europe⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 26 May 2016 entitled ‘Poverty: a gender perspective’⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 November 2018 on the situation of women with disabilities¹⁰,
- having regard to the Gender Equality Index of the European Institute on Gender Equality,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0152),
- having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2017 on minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences¹²,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 July 2017 on working conditions and precarious employment¹³,
- having regard to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights

⁴ OJ C 9 E, 15.1.2010, p. 11.

⁵ OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 8.

⁶ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0176.

⁷ OJ C 366, 27.10.2017, p. 19.

⁸ OJ C 482, 23.12.2016, p. 31.

⁹ OJ C 76, 28.2.2018, p. 93.

¹⁰ OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 164.

¹¹ OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 156.

¹² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0054.

¹³ OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 88.

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- having regard to the reports of the European Anti-Poverty Network, and the relevant reports of the European Disability Forum and the European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network,
- having regard to the objectives set out in the European Green Deal for achieving a just and fair transition by providing access to reskilling programmes and employment opportunities in new economic sectors,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 January 2020 entitled ‘A Strong Social Europe For Just Transitions’ (COM(2020)0014),
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Petitions,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A9-0006/2021),

Rising inequality and poverty

- A. whereas one of the EU’s strengths is its social model; whereas technological developments and the global trend of rising inequalities require that social model to be reassessed and adapted to our modern, fast-paced, complex and unpredictable global environment;
- B. whereas according to Eurostat’s definition, individuals are at risk of in-work poverty when they work for over half the year and when their yearly equivalised disposable income is below 60 % of the national household median income level (after social transfers); whereas the latest Eurostat figures show that 9.4 % of European workers were at risk of poverty in 2018¹⁵;
- C. whereas inequality exists both within and between Member States and varies significantly; whereas the gap in net wealth between the wealthiest percentiles and everyone else is widening; whereas, while net wealth per household in the Eurogroup countries fell for the bottom 20 % in 2017, it increased relatively sharply for the top 20 %¹⁶, and the bottom 20 % of households had net debt averaging EUR 4 500, while the top 10 % had net assets of EUR 1 189 700¹⁷;
- D. whereas the factors contributing to poverty and the increase in net wealth inequality are

¹⁴ <https://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-global-rights-index-2019>

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_01_41/default/table?lang=en

¹⁶ Household Finance and Consumption Network, ‘The Household Finance and Consumption Survey: Results from the 2017 wave’, European Central Bank Statistics Paper Series No 36, March 2020, p. 25.

<https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/scpsps/ecb.sps36-0245ed80c7.en.pdf?bd73411fbeb0a33928ce4c5ef2c5e872>

¹⁷ Household Finance and Consumption Network, ‘The Household Finance and Consumption Survey: Wave 2017 – Statistical tables’, June 2020, p. 5.

https://www.ecb.europa.eu/home/pdf/research/hfcn/HFCS_Statistical_Tables_Wave_2017.pdf?656f4e10de45c91c3c882840e9174eac

complex and interlinked, and primarily include wage inequality, gender inequality, the lack of affordable housing, discrimination, low education levels, technological changes in the world of work and structural changes in the labour market; whereas increasing productivity without corresponding wage increases also exacerbates economic disparities within and between Member States;

- E. whereas the risk of the acceleration of the phenomenon of income exclusion among workers has a particular impact not only on low-skilled workers, but also on graduates (including university graduates) entering the labour market; whereas the income gap between the highest and lowest earners is set to widen;
- F. whereas one in six workers in the EU earns a low wage, namely a wage lower than two thirds of the national median wage, and this share is constantly rising; whereas low wages have not kept up with other wages in many Member States, thus worsening income inequalities and in-work poverty and reducing the capacity of low-wage earners to cope with economic difficulties;
- G. whereas the downturn in the labour market during the previous crisis created a dramatic increase in the number of involuntary part-time workers, who are most likely to work in basic or lower-level service occupations and sectors at very high risk of in-work poverty;
- H. whereas equality between women and men and non-discrimination are founding values of the European Union, as enshrined in the TEU and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- I. whereas women in the EU-27 earn 15 % less than men on average¹⁸, 9.38 % when adjusted for different causes¹⁹; whereas decades of the gender pay gap have resulted in a 37 % gender gap in pension income, a situation that creates an unequal level of economic independence between elderly women and men;
- J. whereas the uneven distribution of care responsibilities in the EU, with women bearing a disproportionate burden as primary care-givers in families, along with limited access to childcare and elderly care facilities in some Member States, results in periods of absence from the labour market and thus gender pay and pension gaps; whereas this uneven distribution of care responsibilities, as well as unequal pay for work typically carried out by women and the impact of career breaks on promotion and pension advancement are all factors in female poverty;

¹⁸ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200227STO73519/gender-pay-gap-in-europe-facts-and-figures-infographic>

¹⁹ Adjustment is a statistical method that allows populations to be compared by taking into account differences in the distribution of different factors (sector of activity, age, occupation etc.) between these populations. The unadjusted gender pay gap is calculated as the relative difference between the average hourly earnings of women and men. It provides a simple indicator of wage inequalities, which explains its extensive use by policymakers. However, the unadjusted gender pay gap also includes both the possible discrimination between men and women in terms of 'unequal pay for equal work' and the impact of differences in the average characteristics of men and women in the labour market.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/report-gender-pay-gap-eu-countries_october2018_en_0.pdf.

- K. whereas in 2017, the risk of poverty and social exclusion was 23.3 % for women, higher than for men (21.6 %) ²⁰;
- L. whereas the gender pay gap is generally lower for new labour market entrants ²¹; whereas equal opportunities should continue to be promoted in order to further reduce inequalities between women and men;
- M. whereas women's employment is considerably higher in the service sector than in industry, with women mostly being employed in the health and social sectors and in retail, manufacturing, education and business activities, with an increasing concentration of women working part-time and in casual jobs;
- N. whereas gender mainstreaming is an important tool for the integration of gender equality in all EU policies, measures and actions, including labour market and social policies to promote equal opportunities and combat all forms of discrimination against women;
- O. whereas the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) includes recommendations on gender equality, equal opportunities and active support to employment;
- P. whereas principle 6 of the EPSR establishes that in-work poverty must be prevented and that adequate minimum wages must be ensured, in a way that provides for the satisfaction of the needs of workers and their families in the light of national economic and social conditions, while safeguarding access to employment and incentives to seek work; whereas under the EPSR, where a principle refers to workers, it concerns all persons in employment, regardless of their employment status, modality or duration;
- Q. whereas young people struggle to find quality and stable jobs with permanent contracts and often experience periods of long-term unemployment; whereas many Member States allow employers to pay younger employees a lower salary, which discriminates against younger workers; whereas young people often take on unpaid internships with no job prospects;
- R. whereas precarious employment affects some groups significantly more than others, with some populations, such as Romani people, having been overrepresented in atypical, unstable and low-paid work; whereas 80% of Romani people and their children live on an income below the respective national at-risk-of-poverty threshold ²², regardless of whether they are in employment or not; whereas Romani people have been hit hard by the pandemic and the containment measures ²³;
- S. whereas 95 million people (21.7 %) in the EU are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which means that the economic survival, social participation and quality of life ²⁴ of one in five people in the world's third largest economic area are at risk;

²⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20181017-1?inheritRedirect=true>

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics#Gender_pay_gap_much_lower_for_young_employees

²² https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf

²³ <http://ergonetwork.org/2020/04/eu-recovery-plan-the-case-of-roma/>

²⁴ Quality of life is the notion of human welfare (well-being) measured by social indicators rather than

whereas 85.3 million people (16.9 %) in the EU are affected by poverty or social exclusion after social transfers;

- T. whereas EU poverty statistics show major differences between Member States' success in meeting the target to reduce poverty and social exclusion;
- U. whereas 8.2 million people have been lifted out of the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion categories compared to the 2008 baseline, thanks in large part to improved labour market conditions, and reductions in severe material deprivation²⁵ and in the proportion of people living in households with very low work intensity²⁶ in some Member States;
- V. whereas despite a substantial improvement of the situation in some Member States, the EU missed its target set by the Europe 2020 Strategy to reduce the absolute number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million by 2020 compared to 2008;
- W. whereas some categories of workers such as seasonal or some cross-border workers are at particularly high risk of in-work poverty and social exclusion and are often employed on short-term work contracts with little or no job security, labour rights or social protection;
- X. whereas there are various economic and social consequences of precarious living and working conditions and in-work poverty, including lower levels of subjective mental well-being, problems with accommodation and one's living environment, poor relationships and feelings of social exclusion²⁷;
- Y. whereas workers affected by in-work poverty often work in jobs with unacceptable working conditions, such as working without collective agreement, violations of working hours²⁸ and occupational health and safety risks;
- Z. whereas in times of economic recession, such workers are in an even weaker position on

quantitative measures of income and production (source: Eurostat).

²⁵ Material deprivation refers to a state of economic strain, defined as the enforced inability (rather than the choice not to do so) to pay unexpected expenses or to afford a one-week annual holiday away from home, a meal involving meat, chicken or fish every second day, the adequate heating of a dwelling or durable goods like a washing machine or colour TV. Severe material deprivation, meanwhile, refers to the inability to afford at least 4 of the following 11 categories: mortgage or rent payments, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments, a one-week annual holiday, a meal involving meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, unexpected financial expenses, a telephone (including mobile), a colour TV, a washing machine, a car or heating (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quality_of_life_indicators_-_material_living_conditions#General_overview).

²⁶The indicator 'persons living in households with very low work intensity' is defined as the number of persons living in a [household](#) where the members of working age worked less than 20 % of their total potential during the previous 12 months. The work intensity of a household is the ratio of the total number of months that all working-age household members have worked during the income [reference year](#) and the total number of months the same household members theoretically could have worked in the same period. A working-age person is a person aged 18-59 years, excluding students aged between 18 and 24 years. Households composed only of children, of students aged less than 25 and/or people aged 60 or more are completely excluded from the indicator calculation.

²⁷ Eurofound, 'In-work poverty in the EU', 5 September 2017.

²⁸ As defined in the Working Time Directive, OJ L 299, 18.11.2003, p. 9.

the labour market;

- AA. whereas overall, part-timers, and in particular involuntary part-timers, have a higher poverty risk when combining different risk factors, including a low wage, unstable jobs, being single earners and having dependent household members²⁹;
- AB. whereas 5.8% of the population of the EU-27 were living in severe material deprivation in 2019 and whereas extreme poverty exists in numerous regions and communities; whereas this share is likely to increase significantly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes this problem even more pressing;
- AC. whereas energy poverty is a particularly widespread problem across Europe, with between 50 and 125 million people unable to afford proper indoor thermal comfort³⁰; whereas 11 % of households in the EU have no internet access³¹;
- AD. whereas household³²poverty is decreasing³³ slowly: every fourth child under the age of 18 is at risk of poverty or social exclusion and thus trapped in a cycle whereby disadvantage recurs from generation to generation³⁴; whereas single parents (34.2 %) and large families are particularly affected³⁵; whereas families with a child or other relatives with disabilities are at a higher risk of poverty;
- AE. whereas rents are constantly rising in most Member States; whereas the housing cost overburden rate³⁶ in the EU is 9.6 %, which means that people living in these households spend 40 % or more of their equivalised disposable income on housing³⁷; whereas in some Member States the housing cost overburden rate is as much as 50-90 %³⁸; whereas low-income tenant households in the EU face median housing costs of between 20 and 45 % of their disposable incomes;
- AF. whereas one of the main contributors to the net wealth disparity is changes in house prices; whereas the scarcity of affordable housing is becoming the biggest driver of

²⁹ Eurofound, 'In-work poverty in the EU', 5 September 2017.

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/content/introduction-5_en

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals

³² A household, in the context of surveys on social conditions, is defined as a housekeeping unit or, operationally, as a social unit: having common arrangements; sharing household expenses or daily needs; in a shared common residence. A household includes either one person living alone or a group of people, not necessarily related, living at the same address with common housekeeping, i.e. sharing at least one meal per day or sharing a living or sitting room.

³³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10163468/3-16102019-CP-EN.pdf/edc3178f-ae3e-9973-f147-b839ee522578>

³⁴ Eurostat, 'EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) methodology – 2011 intergenerational transmission of disadvantages' ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_statistics_on_income_and_living_conditions_\(EU-SILC\)_methodology_-_2011_intergenerational_transmission_of_disadvantages](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_statistics_on_income_and_living_conditions_(EU-SILC)_methodology_-_2011_intergenerational_transmission_of_disadvantages)).

³⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quality_of_life_indicators_-_material_living_conditions#General_overview

³⁶ Percentage of the population who live in a household for which the total housing costs (net of housing allowances) represent more than 40 % of the total disposable household income (net of housing allowances).

³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Housing_statistics#Housing_affordability

³⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi163/default/table?lang=en>

inequalities in many Member States;

- AG. whereas homelessness is increasing throughout Europe, with around 700 000 people estimated to have been homeless in 2019³⁹: 70 % more than a decade ago⁴⁰;
- AH. whereas, in 2017, the percentage of young people aged 18-24 who, although in employment, were at risk of poverty in the European Union was estimated at 11 % and as much as 28.2 % in Romania⁴¹;
- AI. whereas old-age poverty continues to increase: the at-risk-of-poverty rate for people over 65 was on average 16.1 % (EU-27); whereas this figure will continue to grow mainly due to precarious and atypical employment, which is particularly prevalent among the elderly⁴²;
- AJ. whereas in-work poverty strips work of its basic purpose of providing a decent life for employees and their families by preventing them from becoming economically independent;
- AK. whereas Article 4 of the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe stipulates that all workers have the right to fair remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families;

Declining collective bargaining coverage

- AL. whereas collective bargaining coverage in OECD countries has declined over the last three decades from 46 % to 32 % on average; whereas in at least 14 EU Member States 50% of employees work without a collective agreement; whereas only seven Member States have a collective bargaining coverage rate above 80 %⁴³; whereas the decline was swiftest in countries that underwent structural reforms which targeted collective bargaining⁴⁴;
- AM. whereas well-coordinated collective bargaining systems that have extensive coverage foster good labour market performance and whereas workers who are covered by collective agreements usually enjoy better working conditions and a better-quality working environment than those who are not;
- AN. whereas the number of countries worldwide in which workers are excluded from the right to establish or join a trade union increased from 92 in 2018 to 107 in 2019; whereas the highest increase was in Europe; whereas 40 % of European countries do not allow workers to join trade unions, 68 % violated the right to strike and 50 % violated

³⁹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2020-01-13/11/housing-urgent-action-needed-to-address-homelessness-in-europe>

⁴⁰ https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/magazine/2019/Spring/Homeless_in_Europe_magazine_-_Spring_2019.pdf; <https://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2020/07/23/fifth-overview-of-housing-exclusion-in-europe-2020>

⁴¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190122-1?inheritRedirect=true>

⁴² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi012/default/table?lang=en>

⁴³ OECD, Visser (2016) ICTWSS Database.

<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-reply-first-phase-consultation-social-partners-under-article-154-tfeu-possible-action>, p. 6, no 15.

⁴⁴ Eurofound, 'Industrial relations: Developments 2015-2019', 11 December 2020.

the right to collective bargaining⁴⁵;

- AO. whereas for workers in rural areas it is more difficult to gain trade union representation and negotiate local and sectoral collective agreements, which also depends on the sector;
- AP. whereas pay growth for the euro area between 2000 and 2016 was below productivity growth⁴⁶; whereas wage increases have not kept pace with the increase in value added, which has entrenched existing inequality;
- AQ. whereas collective bargaining and sectoral collective agreements not only regulate wage levels but also working conditions, such as working time, paid leave, vacations and upskilling opportunities;
- AR. whereas strong social partners and collective bargaining can have a positive impact on the overall wage levels in Europe, including both the minimum and median wage; whereas collective bargaining ensures that workers are heard and respected; whereas there is evidence of a positive correlation between workers' participation at the workplace and company performance and revenue⁴⁷;

Increase in atypical and precarious employment

- AS. whereas the employment rate for persons with disabilities (50.6 %) was significantly lower than the total employment rate (74.8 %) in 2017⁴⁸;
- AT. whereas as a result, persons with disabilities are at greater risk of in-work poverty (11 % vs. the EU average of 9.1 %) ⁴⁹;
- AU. whereas only 20.7 % of women with disabilities and 28.6 % of men with disabilities are in full-time employment⁵⁰;
- AV. whereas in some Member States, persons with disabilities often lose their disability entitlements upon taking up employment, which increases their risk of in-work poverty;
- AW. whereas in some Member States, persons with disabilities employed in sheltered workshops do not necessarily have employee status, labour rights or a guaranteed minimum wage⁵¹;
- AX. whereas getting persons with disabilities into the labour market has proven to be even

⁴⁵ <https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/2019-06-ituc-global-rights-index-2019-report-en-2.pdf>

⁴⁶ OECD, 'Negotiating Our Way Up: Collective Bargaining in a Changing World of Work', 18 November 2019, Figure 3.10, p. 125.

⁴⁷ Van den Berg, A., Grift, Y., van Witteloostuijn, A., 'The effect of employee workplace representation on firm performance: a cross-country comparison within Europe', Research Paper 2013-008, ACED 2013-016, University of Antwerp, April 2013.

⁴⁸ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200604STO80506/parliament-calls-for-a-new-ambitious-eu-disability-strategy>

⁴⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/34425.pdf>

⁵⁰ Gender Equality Index 2019.

⁵¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/empl/dv/empl20141120-wss-people-disabilities-empl20141120-wss-people-disabilities-en.pdf

more difficult in the wake of the financial crisis⁵²;

- AY. whereas the proportion of workers living in a household at risk of poverty rose from 8 % to 9.4 % within ten years – this corresponds to 20.5 million people⁵³;
- AZ. whereas a correlation has been found between the rise in non-standard forms of employment and the increased proportion of Europeans at risk of in-work poverty⁵⁴; whereas 16.2 % of those working part-time or on temporary contracts are more exposed to the risk of in-work poverty, compared to 6.1 % of those on a permanent contract;
- BA. whereas the level of education has a significant bearing on the risk of in-work poverty; whereas the risk of in-work-poverty is considerably higher for low-skilled workers; whereas in some Member States there is even a risk of in-work poverty for high-skilled workers⁵⁵;
- BB. whereas there are different wage-setting practices across the EU;
- BC. whereas minimum wage systems – where they exist – vary widely in scope and coverage across the Member States⁵⁶; whereas minimum wage systems also vary in terms of their absolute and relative level and whereas there are considerable gaps in terms of coverage and adequacy to ensure a decent living; whereas even if these differences are narrower once price differences have been factored in, purchasing power disparities remain wide⁵⁷; whereas the percentage of people who receive a minimum wage also varies considerably between the Member States;
- BD. whereas the minimum wage is consistently above the defined poverty risk threshold (60 % gross median) in three Member States only and does not provide protection against poverty in other Member States; whereas some sectors, groups of workers and forms of work are sometimes not included or covered by minimum wage arrangements or collective agreements;
- BE. whereas workers earning a minimum wage often have difficulties making ends meet; whereas more specifically, 7 out of 10 workers earning a minimum wage have at least ‘some’ difficulties in making ends meet, compared to 5 out of 10 other workers with substantial differences between the Member States⁵⁸;
- BF. whereas the contraction of employment during the financial crisis in 2008 created a dramatic increase in the number of people in atypical employment, short-term work and part-time employment, including involuntary part-time employment⁵⁹; whereas

⁵² Eurostat Statistics Explained, ‘Europe 2020 indicators – poverty and social exclusion’, 11 June 2020 (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Europe_2020_indicators_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion&oldid=394836).

⁵³ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=9378>

⁵⁴ Eurofound, ‘In-work poverty in the EU’, 5 September 2017.

⁵⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_peps04/default/table?lang=en

⁵⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Minimum_wage_statistics

⁵⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Minimum_wage_statistics#Minimum_wages_expressed_in_purchasing_power_standards

⁵⁸ Eurofound, ‘Minimum wages in 2020: Annual review’, 4 June 2020.

⁵⁹ ETUI, Benchmarking Working Europe 2019, ‘Labour market and social developments’ chapter, 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=9378>

involuntary part-time workers are most likely to work in basic or lower-level service occupations and sectors and have among the highest in-work poverty risk levels; whereas over a third of part-time workers involuntarily work part-time and one in two work in short-term employment⁶⁰;

- BG. whereas standard full-time open-ended contracts account for 59 % of total employment in the EU, with atypical, and often but not always precarious employment, continually on the rise⁶¹;
- BH. whereas short-term employment is not conducive to the development, training and adaptation of the skills of employees in line with the changing world of work;
- BI. whereas there are great fluctuations in the numbers of workers performing precarious work in the EU in wholesale and retail trade, transport, the hotel industry, catering⁶² and the culture and events management sectors;
- BJ. whereas in-work poverty can also affect young professionals with a high level of education, in particular in Member States with high levels of youth unemployment; whereas while the percentage of young people in in-work poverty is lower for those with a university degree than those with lower levels of education, it nonetheless remains considerable in some Member States; whereas these young adults often have to contend with low wages, unfair working conditions, bogus self-employment, atypical work contracts and even undeclared work⁶³;
- BK. whereas additional income, more flexibility, gaining experience, attracting clients and a lack of opportunities in the traditional labour market seem to be the main motivations for taking on platform work; whereas platform work is generally positive for labour market integration⁶⁴; whereas platform work is heterogeneous, and, as a result, a one-size-fits-all solution would undermine the emergence of important forms of work⁶⁵;
- BL. whereas the European Labour Authority (ELA) was established in July 2019 with the aim of supporting Member States and the Commission in the effective application and enforcement of Union law related to labour mobility and social security coordination; whereas the ELA is expected to reach its full operational capacity by 2024;
- BM. whereas although the Commission has announced its intention to put forward a proposal for a European Social Security Number, no concrete proposal has yet been put forward;
- BN. whereas the rate of adult learning in the EU was 11.1 % in 2018, while the 2020 target was 15 %⁶⁶; whereas technology and innovation have great potential for unlocking

⁶⁰ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/587285/IPOL_STU%282016%29587285_EN.pdf

⁶¹ Eurofound, 'In-work poverty in the EU', 5 September 2017

(<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2017/in-work-poverty-in-the-eu>).

⁶² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20200511-1>

⁶³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20200511-1>

⁶⁴ https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef18001en.pdf

⁶⁵ https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef18001en.pdf

⁶⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190517-1>

opportunities, yet more than 40 % of adults in the EU do not have basic digital skills;

The economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

- BO. whereas unemployment and precarious and atypical employment rose sharply during the 2008 financial crisis, and in the COVID-19 crisis the focus is also on social issues with job losses, short-time work and threats to economic survival, e.g. for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), small craft industries, small traders and cross-border workers; whereas the middle class is shrinking, the gap between rich and poor is widening and the disparities within and between Member States are being exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis;
- BP. whereas in April 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, 50 % of workers in the EU experienced a reduction in their working time, with more than one third (34 %) of those in employment reporting that it had decreased ‘a lot’ and 16 % saying it had decreased ‘a little’⁶⁷;
- BQ. whereas 75 % of EU citizens consider that their current financial situation is worse than it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, while 68 % report difficulties in making ends meet and 68 % are unable to maintain their standard of living for more than three months without an income; whereas 16 % of workers in the EU believe that they are likely to lose their jobs in the near future⁶⁸;
- BR. whereas the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could have serious long-term consequences for the labour market, in particular for young people or vulnerable workers, as it may force them to accept precarious and atypical jobs, which will considerably exacerbate working conditions and widen existing inequalities;
- BS. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic will therefore most likely have a direct impact in terms of increasing poverty and in-work poverty⁶⁹, especially among the most vulnerable groups in society;
- BT. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for more inclusive social protection covering all types of workers, especially self-employed and platform workers;
- BU. whereas low-paying and high-paying jobs continue to grow in number, yet the number of middle-paying occupations is shrinking; whereas low-paying jobs do not imply low qualifications, particularly for platform workers; whereas there is an increasing demand for highly educated workers, even in low-paying jobs;
1. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the EU has an obligation to ensure that all workers enjoy working conditions that respect their health, safety and dignity and calls for attention to be given to the fact that poverty and exclusion from the labour market and society exacerbate inequalities and segregation; recalls the fact that in implementing their policies, the

⁶⁷ Eurofound, Living, Working and COVID-19 dataset, 28 September 2020 (<http://eurofound.link/covid19data>).

⁶⁸ Eurofound, Living, Working and COVID-19 dataset, 28 September 2020 (<http://eurofound.link/covid19data>).

⁶⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/projected-poverty-impacts-of-COVID-19>

Commission and the Member States should further strengthen the EU's social model and take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of a decent standard of living and adequate social protection for all, the fight against poverty and social exclusion;

2. Stresses that the TEU sets out that the Union has the basic obligation to work towards Europe's sustainable development, on the basis of, inter alia, a highly competitive social market economy that sets out to achieve full employment and social progress and a high level of protection; stresses that the EU should combat social exclusion and discrimination, and should promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and the protection of the rights of the child;
3. Agrees with the Commission that income inequality in the EU as a world region is lower than in some other major advanced economies, but it remains a concern; stresses that high inequality raises concerns about fairness, as entrenched inequality may result in inequality of opportunity and reduce potential growth; underlines that relatively high inequality may be linked to a higher risk-of-poverty rate and more pronounced social exclusion and a higher incidence of financial distress and, as such, may reduce social cohesion⁷⁰;
4. Notes that, although poverty rates among women vary considerably from one Member State to another, the risk of poverty and social exclusion in the risk groups to which older women, single women, women with children and single mothers, refugee and migrant women, women of colour, women from ethnic minorities, homosexual, bisexual and transgender women and women with disabilities belong is high, the average trend being that women are more at risk of poverty and social exclusion than men (22.8 % in 2018 in the EU); notes that other intersectional risk factors such as inactivity, lack of care services for children and dependant family members make some specific categories of women more vulnerable to poverty risks than others;
5. Stresses that one in two people from a non-EU migrant background are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, that levels of precarious work are especially high among migrant and refugee women, and that those with dependent or irregular status face extremely high rates of poverty; stresses that four out of five members of the Roma community have incomes below the poverty threshold and that fewer than one in five Roma women (aged 16 and over) are in employment; highlights that discrimination in access and quality of education, training and employment contribute to this reality; calls for the EU to work with the Member States to ensure the full implementation of EU and national employment standards without discrimination of any kind, including through monitoring, complaints and redress mechanisms that are effective, independent and accessible to all workers;
6. Points out that, according to Eurostat, there are currently 64.6 million women and 57.6 million men living in poverty in the Member States, which shows that the impact of poverty on women and men is different; notes that those numbers show just how many women are affected, and must be examined alongside other indicators, such as age, life

⁷⁰ Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019
([https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738\(Id=en&pubId=8219\)](https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738(Id=en&pubId=8219))).

expectancy, income inequalities, the gender pay gap, household type and social transfers to understand their full significance; stresses that women's exposure to poverty is likely to be understated and calls on the Member States to collect poverty data in a way that reflects a person's household and individual reality, together with relevant equality data, and to conduct gender analyses of poverty statistics and policies, as one cannot assume that resources are equally shared among men and women within households;

Measures against inequality

7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to achieve the goal of comparable living conditions through upward social and economic convergence, to counter the increasing inequalities within and between Member States and to increase solidarity; encourages the Member States to strengthen collective bargaining systems and to ensure minimum social protections and a social security system for all age groups; stresses that these objectives can be achieved through instruments such as, but not limited to, a minimum income, minimum wages and minimum pensions under the first pillar⁷¹ in accordance with the competences and laws of each Member State, and respecting all general principles of the European Union, including fundamental rights, proportionality, legal certainty, equality before the law and subsidiarity;
8. Reminds the Commission and the Member States that preventing and tackling in-work poverty must be part of the overall goal to eradicate poverty in the European Union;
9. Believes that the availability of affordable and accessible services (in particular public services) of good quality is essential for reducing inequalities and poverty levels; considers it essential, therefore, that Member States take measures to guarantee access to good-quality services and, in consequence, universal access to healthcare, education, affordable housing, energy supply and social protections;
10. Is convinced that the axiom 'work is the best remedy for poverty' does not always apply today in the face of low-wage sectors and precarious working conditions (including some forms of atypical employment), which is affecting the sustainability and adequacy of social security systems; believes, furthermore, that effective collective agreements and effective statutory minimum wage systems, where applicable, are important instruments for combating poverty;
11. Points out that growth is essential to tackling precariousness and poverty; is convinced that entrepreneurship needs to be fostered, including among women and young people; points out that SMEs, which create jobs and wealth and are the backbone of the European economy, must be supported; points out that they bring vitality to territories and contribute to innovation and the construction of a competitive, diversified and sustainable labour market; stresses that EU legislation must benefit businesses, particularly SMEs;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, on the basis of their obligations under

⁷¹ The 'first pillar' of a typical three-pillar approach to pensions consists in public statutory pensions that are administered by the state and usually financed from social insurance contributions and/or general tax revenues on a PAYG basis. Source: EPRS briefing, 'European Union pension systems: adequate and sustainable?', November 2015.

the ILO Conventions and the revised European Social Charter and their commitments to the European Pillar of Social Rights and the SDGs, to promote collective bargaining; calls on the Member States to adapt their national legislation where it hampers collective bargaining and the right to associate, negotiate and conclude collective agreements, and to respect and enforce the right to fair minimum wages, where applicable;

13. Stresses that technological developments and changes in the structure of the economy are resulting in a higher concentration of economic activity and high-skilled jobs in metropolitan areas, which increases social and geographical inequalities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen investments in digital technology in rural areas in order to enhance public services, improve their quality and efficiency and create new modes of service delivery for remote and underserved regions, in order to address inequalities and create better job opportunities;
14. Welcomes the Commission's proposal on the skills agenda; highlights that low levels of education are one of the root causes of in-work poverty and need to be addressed;
15. Calls on the Member States to guarantee equal access to inclusive education and training for all and to strengthen their efforts to reduce early school leaving;
16. Underlines that high-quality education from an early age, vocational education and training, reskilling and upskilling are essential for reducing inequalities and improving workers' abilities to adapt to the changing world of work and facilitating their successful transition into employment;
17. Calls on the Member States, therefore, to work closely with social partners, education and training providers, enterprises and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen and improve education and training systems and to improve their quality and their relevance for the labour market and self-development, including with a view to enabling people to have access to lifelong learning;
18. Stresses that the digital transformation and the growing number of high-qualified and high-skilled occupations require targeted investment in lifelong learning; encourages the Commission and the Member States to offer coherent and comprehensive support for developing the digital skills required, including for older workers; calls, therefore, for targeted investment in digital reskilling and upskilling to enable workers to adapt to change and secure higher wages;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide young people with an adequate level of education and training that will enable them to meet the needs and challenges of the labour market and equip them with knowledge of their labour and social rights so they do not fall into atypical and precarious employment;
20. Reminds the Commission and the Member States of the need for a social progress protocol in the European Treaties which ensures that, in the event of conflicts between fundamental economic freedoms and fundamental social and labour rights, the latter is treated at the same level as the economic freedoms of the single market;
21. Calls for an overarching European anti-poverty strategy, with ambitious targets for

reducing poverty and ending extreme poverty in Europe by 2030, in line with the principles laid down in the European Pillar of Social Rights and taking into account the SDGs;

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make use of financial instruments such as the Youth Guarantee and EU programmes in order to tackle youth unemployment, boost young people's employability and encourage them to take up stable and non-precarious jobs;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take real measures to combat tax avoidance and tax fraud as an important means of reducing economic inequalities and improving the collection of tax revenue in the Member States;
24. Calls on the Commission to update its framework for the establishment and development of cooperatives and social economy enterprises, which by nature place a stronger emphasis on fair working conditions and the empowerment of workers;
25. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce initiatives to promote women's empowerment through education, vocational training and lifelong learning, as well as access to finance, female entrepreneurship and women's representation in future-oriented sectors with a view to ensuring access to high-quality employment; calls, in particular, for greater promotion of STEM subjects, digital education, artificial intelligence and financial literacy in order to combat prevailing stereotypes and ensure that more women enter these sectors and contribute to their development;
26. Highlights the regular dialogue with women facing poverty and decision makers through forums at national, regional and EU level to monitor the effectiveness of current policies/services and suggest solutions;
27. Underlines the necessity to ensure adequate financing for NGOs and emphasise the need for them to access EU funds in order to deliver innovative and effective services to fight poverty;
28. Welcomes the Commission's plan to present a child guarantee⁷² without delay;
29. Calls on the Member States to ensure access to decent, affordable, accessible, energy-efficient and healthy housing for all and to do more to promote social housing, including public housing; encourages the Member States to strengthen the exchange of best practices on effective social housing policies;
30. Calls on the Member States and local authorities to adopt adequate housing policies, to create conditions and support for investments in social and affordable housing, and to tackle energy poverty;
31. Calls on the Commission to propose an EU strategic framework for national homelessness strategies in view of the links between in-work poverty and homelessness;

⁷² As per European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2015 on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty, OJ C 366, 27.10.2017, p. 19, and the Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2019-2024: 'To support every child in need, I will create the European Child Guarantee, picking up on the idea proposed by the European Parliament'

calls on the Member States to take urgent measures to prevent and tackle homelessness and to prevent forced evictions;

32. Underlines the importance of increasing funding for the most deprived under the new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) as a key element of European solidarity and as a way of helping to combat the worst forms of poverty in the EU, such as food deprivation and child poverty;

Minimum protection of living and working conditions

33. Considers that a legislative framework with a view to regulating telework conditions across the EU is necessary to ensure decent working and employment conditions in the digital economy, thereby contributing to reducing inequalities and addressing the issue of in-work poverty;
34. Calls on the Commission to present an EU framework on minimum income;
35. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to invest in active labour policies so as to render European workers and economies more resilient and to endow workers with valuable skills;
36. Acknowledges the Commission's proposal for an EU directive to ensure that workers in the EU are protected by adequate minimum wages allowing for a decent living;
37. Stresses that the directive should provide clear safeguards in Member States where wages are – as a general rule – collectively bargained by social partners;
38. Recalls the proposed measures of the Commission's political guidelines for 2019-2024⁷³, which aim to ensure that workers in the Union have a fair minimum wage that should allow for a decent living wherever they work;
39. Recalls that in accordance with the non-regression principle and more favourable provisions, directives on labour rights provide for minimum standards and that individual Member States are free to provide higher levels of protection and standards;
40. Considers that this directive should ensure, through collective agreements and statutory minimum wages, that no workers or their families are at risk of poverty and that everyone can make a living from their work and participate in society;
41. Underlines that the final directive should guarantee that statutory minimum wages – where applicable – are always set above the poverty threshold;
42. Calls on the Member States and social partners to ensure that minimum wages are in place, in keeping with national practices and taking into account their impact on competitiveness, job creation and in-work poverty;
43. Stresses that measures must be taken to ensure that employers do not engage in practices that deduct from minimum wages the costs necessary for carrying out work,

⁷³ 'A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe', Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2019-2024.

such as accommodation, the requisite clothing, tools, personal protection and other equipment;

44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to enforce the legislative framework on minimum working conditions for all workers, in particular for those workers employed under precarious working conditions, which also often affect atypical workers or non-standard workers in the gig economy, and to improve this framework by addressing gaps in the legislation and improving existing directives⁷⁴ or through new legal acts where relevant;
45. Calls on the Member States to ensure social protection schemes for all workers and calls on the Commission to complement and support the Member States' activities regarding social security and social protection of workers;
46. Highlights that labour mobility is essential for getting the most out of Europeans' talents and ambitions, maximising the economic performance and prosperity of companies and individuals, and offering people a wide range of opportunities; calls on the Commission and Member States to remove the existing barriers to mobility in the European Union;
47. Calls on Member States to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the workplace⁷⁵;
48. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to combat strategies adding to in-work poverty, such as undeclared overtime, unreliable or unpredictable working time planning by employers, zero-hour contracts, undeclared economic activity and the grey economy; recalls that health and safety at the workplace is the employers' responsibility and that job-related training must take place during working hours;
49. Notes that the Commission's European Summit on Platform Work, which sought to explore possibilities to improve the labour conditions of platform workers, was postponed because of the COVID-19 crisis; urges the Commission to hold this summit as soon as possible;
50. Notes the societal consequences of platform work, namely workers not enjoying labour rights and social protections, and missing social security contributions and taxes;
51. Acknowledges the Commission's plan to adopt a legislative proposal⁷⁶ on platform workers; calls on the Commission to ensure that labour relations between platforms and workers are adapted to the new realities of a digitalised society and economy and are clarified by covering those workers via existing labour laws and social security provisions, to improve the working conditions, skills and education of platform workers, and to secure predictable working hours for platform workers;
52. Stresses that an EU legislative proposal should ensure that platform workers are able to

⁷⁴ Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union, OJ L 186, 11.7.2019, p. 105.

⁷⁵ The provision of reasonable accommodation is an obligation under the EU's Employment Equality Directive, OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16, and Article 5 of the UN CRPD

⁷⁶ Annexes to the Commission Work Programme 2021 (COM(2020)0690), policy objective No 9 under the section entitled 'A Europe Fit for the Digital Age'.

form workers' representations and to organise in unions in order to conclude collective agreements;

53. Calls on the Member States to swiftly transpose and fully implement the Work-Life Balance Directive⁷⁷;
54. Calls on the Member States to ensure access to affordable and quality childcare in general and, in particular, for single parents, the parents of children with disabilities and the parents of large households; recalls that access to childcare is of particular importance for jobseekers and workers in an unstable employment situation, irrespective of the nature of the contract, as well as access to care facilities for persons with disabilities or dependant relatives, in order to prevent such workers with care responsibilities from being trapped in precarious work, which often leads to in-work-poverty;
55. Stresses that better options for shared parental leave could have a positive impact on employment for women; calls on the Member States to take measures to ensure that beneficiaries of the payment or allowances of parental leave will be protected from falling below the poverty line;
56. Stresses the need to ensure compliance with the rules on equality, to tackle all forms of discrimination, with particular regard to wages and working conditions, to provide equal opportunities and to close gaps in the legislation that affect disadvantaged groups; calls, in addition, for the unblocking of the horizontal Anti-Discrimination Directive;
57. Calls on the Commission to promote equal participation and opportunities for men and women in the labour market and to introduce initiatives to promote women's access to finance, female entrepreneurship and women's financial independence;
58. Underlines that tackling the gender pay gap and subsequent pension gap is essential for tackling in-work poverty among women; notes the importance of providing appropriate financial support for childcare during maternity and parental leave;
59. Asks the Member States to consider factoring child-raising responsibilities into pension schemes when women are not able to work and making suitable contributions during such periods;
60. Stresses that measures on pay transparency should aim to achieve equal pay and should allow social partners to conclude collective agreements to achieve this goal;
61. Calls on the Commission to present a Disability Strategy beyond 2020 in order to secure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with the necessary skills to acquire employment in the open labour market and are covered by labour law, social protections and minimum wages;
62. Calls on the Member States not to deprive persons with disabilities of their disability

⁷⁷ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU, OJ L 188, 12.7.2019, p. 79.

entitlements covering their disability-related extra costs when entering the labour market or when surpassing a certain income threshold, as this practice contributes to in-work poverty; calls on the Member States to work to support persons with disabilities to overcome barriers;

63. Calls on the Member States to guarantee that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis as others;
64. Reiterates its call⁷⁸ on the Commission to present binding measures on pay transparency without delay in line with its commitment in the Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025⁷⁹; considers that these measures should fully respect the autonomy of national social partners;
65. Insists that wage transparency should be carried out by employers in both the public and private sector, with due account taken of the specificities of SMEs, while preventing any practices which undermine the achievement of the ‘equal pay for equal work’ principle;
66. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle in-work poverty affecting young people; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take measures against bogus self-employment and the exploitation of young workers through low wages and unclear or unfair working conditions, which could result in in-work poverty; affirms the urgent need to review and strengthen the European Quality Framework for Traineeships in order to include the principle of the remuneration of traineeships and internships among the quality criteria, as well as to ensure adequate access to social protection schemes; reaffirms that youth employment should not be seen as cheap work and that young people should be granted fair working conditions and wages, as well as regular work contracts, also according to their experiences and qualifications;
67. Is concerned that non-standard and precarious work may increase due to the COVID-19 crisis; stresses that statutory minimum wages should cover all workers, including currently excluded categories of workers such as non-standard workers;
68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect more detailed statistics on the rise of precarious employment and some forms of atypical employment in the labour markets and to take responsive measures by adapting and modernising existing labour laws;
69. Welcomes Member States’ initiatives aimed at reducing precarious employment and eliminating fraudulent practices intended to undercut wages and avoid social security contributions⁸⁰ and calls on the Commission to put forward proposals, within the limits of its competences, as defined by the Treaties;
70. Reminds the Member States that public employment services should continue to offer

⁷⁸ Resolution of 30 January 2020 on the gender pay gap, paragraph 2, Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0025.

⁷⁹ According to the strategy, the Commission should have tabled binding measures on pay transparency by the end of 2020.

⁸⁰ Such as establishing subsidies (or letterbox companies) and/or temporary-work agencies in Member States with lower wages for the sole purpose of using posted workers instead of hiring local workers.

as many opportunities as possible for quality employment;

71. Urges Member States to phase out the use of zero-hour contracts; calls on the Commission and Member States to tackle involuntary part-time work and to make strong efforts to promote open-ended employment and to restrict the use of continually renewed temporary contracts;
72. Firmly believes that employers bear full responsibility for providing employees with the equipment, clothing and insurance necessary for them to perform their functions with no cost to workers themselves; stresses that employers are fully responsible for the expenses or training required for employees to fulfil their role;
73. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the proper enforcement of EU law on labour mobility and social security coordination and, in particular, to ensure that workers are informed about their rights, obligations and procedural safeguards in a language they understand before signing their contracts⁸¹; calls on the ELA and the Member States to monitor compliance with applicable labour and social legislation; calls on the Member States to institute labour inspections and to involve the ELA in cross-border situations;
74. Stresses that Member States should ensure that national labour inspectorates undertake effective and adequate controls and inspections, provide suitable complaints mechanisms, and uphold the rights of all workers, in particular those in precarious employment and some forms of atypical employment, and secure their adequate funding;
75. Calls on the Member States to enforce the revised Posting of Workers Directive in order to ensure genuine protection for workers in this category;
76. Emphasises that monitoring and control are of particular importance in cases of third-country nationals working within the Union to ensure their protection and avoid abuses; calls on the Member States to pursue intensive cooperation with the ELA in this respect;
77. Calls for the ELA to have real inspection powers in order to effectively combat illegal practices and the exploitation and abuse of workers;
78. Welcomes the Commission guidelines of 16 July 2020 on the protection of seasonal workers and the Council conclusions of 9 October 2020 on seasonal workers;
79. Takes note of the high number of petitions received by the Committee on Petitions, which alert it to the abusive use of fixed-term contracts in both the public⁸² and private⁸³ sectors and notes in this regard that the most frequently mentioned cause of work stress is job precarity; calls on the Commission to examine these petitions and to provide a

⁸¹ As provided for by Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union.

⁸² These include petitions 0240/18, 0328/18, 0365/18, 0374/18, 0396/18, 0419/18, 0829/2018, 0897/2018, 1161/2018, 0290/19, 0310/2019, 0335/2019, 0579/19, 0624/19, 0652/19, 0683/2019, 0737/2019, 1017/19, 1045/2019, 1241/2019, 1318/2019 and 0036/2020.

⁸³ These include petitions 1378/2013, 0019/2016, 0020/2016, 0021/2016, 0099/2017, 1162/2017, 0110/2018 and 0335/2019.

better response, in line with its competences and those of the Member States in order to tackle in-work poverty, social exclusion and precarious work effectively;

80. Considers prostitution to be a serious form of violence and exploitation affecting mostly women and children; calls on the Member States to adopt specific measures to combat the economic, social and cultural causes of prostitution and support measures for people who are prostituted to facilitate their social and professional reintegration;
81. Is of the opinion that more emphasis should be placed on values and policies that promote work and its link to improving people's quality of life, and that such values and policies should make meaningful contributions to improve their social and physical environment;
82. Welcomes the adoption of the Mobility Package; believes that the Mobility Package is a strong tool with which to combat social dumping and in-work poverty in the transport sector; calls for the fast and full implementation of Regulation (EU) 2020/1054⁸⁴ on driving times, rest periods and tachographs for the benefit of truck drivers across Europe; stresses that further and similar initiatives must be taken to tackle social dumping and in-work poverty for other industries affected by social dumping and poor working conditions, such as air transport and the shipping industry;
83. Believes that internships should be seen by companies as an investment and not as free work; recalls that young people often do not have any other sources of income while working as interns; considers the contribution of interns valuable and essential and that they deserve to be paid; calls on the Commission and Member States to end the practice of unpaid internships and to guarantee high-quality internships with decent pay;
84. Believes that young adult workers should be paid on the basis of their level of experience and should not suffer discrimination in the form of significantly lower wages exclusively based on their age; calls on the Member States, therefore, to end the practice of statutory sub-minimum wages for young adult workers;

Collective agreements

85. Notes that the autonomy of social partners is a valuable asset and stresses the need to ensure it in each Member State and to monitor at EU level compliance therewith; notes the Commission's proposal⁸⁵ to protect and strengthen collective bargaining systems at national level, in particular sectoral level;
86. Calls on the Commission to promote the use of the ESF+ for building capacity among social partners with the aim of strengthening collective bargaining in Europe; calls on Member States to establish the institutions and mechanisms necessary to support collective bargaining, with a particular focus on sectoral collective bargaining; calls on Member States to consult and involve national social partners in law making whenever

⁸⁴ Regulation (EU) 2020/1054 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2020 amending Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 as regards minimum requirements on maximum daily and weekly driving times, minimum breaks and daily and weekly rest periods and Regulation (EU) No 165/2014 as regards positioning by means of tachographs, OJ L 249, 31.7.2020, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 October 2020 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union (COM(2020)0682).

relevant;

87. Acknowledges the Commission's proposal that Member States shall provide for measures enabling conditions for collective bargaining where coverage is less than 70 %⁸⁶ of workers; stresses that social partners must be involved in the decision-making process for the initiation of any such action; believes that any action taken in this regard must not interfere with social partners' autonomy;
88. Calls on the Commission to monitor and the Member States to ensure the right of all workers to organise and to negotiate and conclude collective agreements, and to take immediate action when this right is violated;
89. Calls on the Member States to ensure that unions have access to the workplace, including remote work, for the purposes of getting organised, sharing information and consultation;
90. Urges the Commission to improve the Public Procurement Directives⁸⁷ to prevent competition at the expense of wages so that only those who do not undermine existing collective agreements can successfully bid; calls on the Member States to ensure compliance, monitoring and enforcement;
91. Acknowledges that digitalisation and globalisation have led to a significant increase in self-employment and atypical forms of work; welcomes the Commission's commitment to assessing whether it is necessary to adopt measures at EU level allowing solo self-employed individuals to unite and conclude collective agreements, as well as its commitment to proposing regulatory changes where necessary and the recent public consultation in this regard; awaits the publication of the impact assessment on the initial options for future actions; stresses that this must not serve to delay any other Commission initiative to tackle false self-employment and secure rights for non-standard workers;
92. Believes that every worker must have access to a full overview of who their employer is and their salary and working rights, either in accordance with the sectoral collective agreement or with national legislation; believes that this information should be available to labour inspectorates; believes that this could take the form of a special ID card for cross-border workers, which has already proven effective in some Member States; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to promptly introduce a digital European Social Security Number; believes that a European Social Security Number has considerable potential to serve as a control mechanism for both individuals and relevant authorities in order to guarantee that social security is paid in accordance with the rules and to combat social fraud;

⁸⁶ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 October 2020 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union (COM(2020)0682).

⁸⁷ Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concession contracts, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 1; Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65; Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243.

Social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

93. Calls on the Commission to set out an EU-level response to extend support to women-led SMEs during and after the crisis;
94. Points out that the COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on workers and disadvantaged people; underlines that the policy responses to the pandemic must be human-centred and built on global solidarity; insists that measures to combat poverty and in-work poverty are particularly necessary and should aim to bring about a swift, just and green recovery; calls on the Member States to ensure adequate protection for all vulnerable workers during the pandemic and to work together with social partners on the development of effective, practical, and equitable solutions to the challenges posed by the pandemic; recalls, in this regard, that a sufficient proportion of additional resources under REACT-EU should be used to increase the availability of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) to help the most deprived; equally underlines the importance of ensuring that the ESF+ is allocated sufficient resources in the multiannual financial framework;
95. Calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the economic impact of short-time work schemes, to people who have been permanently or temporarily laid off, and to the social impact on people living precariously; recalls, in this connection, that short-time work schemes are not identical across all Member States and that allowances vary considerably, with employees on low allowances particularly threatened by in-work poverty; calls on the Commission and the Member States, to this end, to protect workers to help them keep their jobs, including by providing financial support such as via short-time schemes and support for those in precarious employment and some forms of atypical work, and to consider financial support for some types of solo self-employed individuals who have lost their financial base owing to the crisis; calls on the Member States, furthermore, to protect people living precariously;
96. Calls on the Member States to put forward minimum standards for their respective national unemployment insurance schemes and minimum security schemes in the form of legal frameworks in order to improve social security for workers and residents in Europe;
97. Calls for measures to be taken to avoid a renewed increase in involuntary part-time employment as a result of COVID-19;
98. Recalls the disturbing reports that have surfaced during the crisis regarding breaches of cross-border and seasonal workers' rights in terms of their working and living conditions; calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle abusive practices and to safeguard the rights of seasonal and cross-border workers employed along the subcontracting and supply chain; calls, in this regard, for Member States to ensure proper and affordable housing facilities for workers, without the costs of these being deducted from workers' salaries;
99. Stresses that the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the importance of employment in professions identified as systemically important for our economy and society; recalls that many of these frontline workers are in low-paid jobs in some Member States, are often undervalued and underpaid, and often have to endure insecure working conditions,

owing in part to a lack of health and social protections; stresses that these professions are mostly carried out by women; points out the necessity for upward convergence as regards care provision;

100. Stresses that in order to cope with major shocks, Member States should adopt long-term strategies to preserve employment and workers' qualifications and alleviate the pressure on national public finances;
101. Calls on the Commission to adopt an EU care strategy, responding to the social impacts on those with caring responsibilities, who are disproportionately women; stresses that this strategy should require significant investment in the care economy, strengthen policies to balance work and care responsibilities throughout a person's life and fill labour shortages, in particular through training, the recognition of skills and better working conditions in these sectors;
102. Awaits the Commission's forthcoming proposal for a long-term European unemployment benefit reinsurance scheme, taking into account the fact that job layoffs will most probably increase; calls for this proposal to cover countries in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), with the possibility of allowing non-EMU countries to join;
103. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to mitigate the worst consequences of COVID-19 through targeted EU and national support and the allocation of sufficient resources; welcomes, in this regard, the creation of the temporary instrument to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) and calls on the Member States to implement it swiftly; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that financial assistance is not provided to undertakings registered in countries listed in Annex I to the Council conclusions on the revised EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that beneficiaries comply with the fundamental values enshrined in the Treaties and that companies receiving public financial support protect workers, guarantee decent working conditions, respect trade unions and applicable collective agreements, pay their share of taxes, and refrain from share buybacks or paying out bonuses to management or dividends to shareholders;
104. Encourages Member States to invest in increasing access to broadband internet, remote education and learning in rural areas at risk of depopulation and generational poverty;
105. Proposes that proactive measures be taken to counter potential high unemployment through EU and national policies and national employment programmes and to foster the green, digital, social, sustainable and just transitions that leave no one behind by investing in new, sustainable and accessible jobs of good quality, reskilling programmes, future-oriented infrastructure, innovation and digital change; believes that particular consideration should be devoted to fostering youth employment;
106. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the consequences of the crisis and to facilitate the transition by taking account of regional particularities, and therefore guarantee a swift allocation of available funding, such as through training in future-oriented jobs, upskilling and reskilling and by developing the ESF+ financially to this end;

107. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to monitor in particular sectors characterised by a high degree of job insecurity, in order to prevent the abuse of workers such as those in temporary positions in the agricultural sector, where seasonal workers face abusive employment conditions that in some cases violate not only labour rights, but also workers' fundamental rights;
108. Stresses that low-income workers are at higher risk of being exposed to COVID-19 since they work in sectors with significantly more human contact, such as the care and transport sectors, or take up work through online platforms without any possibility of teleworking; strongly criticises the long implementation period for the classification of COVID-19 in the Biological Agents Directive⁸⁸; calls for an urgent revision of the Biological Agents Directive with a view to adapting it to global pandemics and other extraordinary circumstances in order to secure the full protection of workers against the risks of exposure as quickly as possible;
109. Highlights that low-income workers often work in sectors with high risks of physical deterioration, which potentially has long-term impacts on their physical and mental wellbeing and impacts their ability to earn an income in the future; believes the current health and safety legislation does not have a sufficient focus on prevention of occupational injuries; calls on the Commission to propose as soon as possible a new strategic framework for health and safety at work post-2020 and calls on the Commission, in this regard, to identify the challenges faced and present instruments for workers in low-income sectors to address these challenges; stresses that the strategy must include a focus on platform workers and workers in non-standard types of work; calls on the Commission to amend Directive 2004/37/EC⁸⁹ to revise and expand the scope of occupational exposure limit values for a number of cancer- or mutation-causing substances;
110. Highlights that work-related stress is widely experienced in low-income sectors; believes that work-related stress must be a key priority of European health and safety legislation; calls on the Commission and Member States, in close cooperation with national social partners, to propose a directive on work-related stress setting company guidelines to tackle work-related stress factors and requiring all companies to formulate a company policy on work-related stress;
111. Considers that it is of paramount importance to make sure that the implementation of the recovery plan for Europe aims to eradicate poverty and socio-economic inequalities and is based on an effective mechanism with targets and benchmarks that make it possible to take accurate measurements of the progress achieved; highlights that the European Parliament must be fully involved in both the ex ante and ex post scrutiny of the recovery plan and that all its elected Members must be given a formal role in order to ensure a fully democratic and transparent evaluation and implementation process;

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⁸⁸ Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work, OJ L 262, 17.10.2000, p. 21.

⁸⁹ Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work, OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 50.

112. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Commission's EU 2020 target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million has not been achieved.

Instead, inequality in the EU has increased both within and between Member States. The impending economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are stoking fears that these inequalities will become more acute.

While just a few years ago the Director-General of the ILO said that work was the best way to combat poverty, this is no longer true for everyone today.

Competition to undercut wages is being fuelled by atypical and precarious employment, gig, platform and crowd work, bogus and solo self-employed work, through outsourcing, sub-contractor chains, privatisation and liberalisation. This also erodes collective agreement systems. The shrinking coverage is leading to a lowering of wages.

This has consequences: much of the competition in the internal market is carried out on the backs of workers. Instead of local construction workers, posted workers are used in order to depress wages, as are seasonal workers who come as harvest workers from a low-wage country to a high-wage country. Low wages are partly topped up by the state and companies are thus being indirectly subsidised. At the same time, purchasing power and domestic demand are falling. Fewer and fewer employees can afford education and training. But labour law and social security must not end at national borders.

There must no longer be a legal framework for a competition to undercut wages.

At the same time, the growth in assets and wages at the top end is increasing enormously. Money is being generated, but distributed unevenly. A huge single market without a binding framework for social standards creates advantages for only a few, while many people fall by the wayside.

The Commission and the Member States must consistently counteract this development in their areas of competence. And the burdens resulting from the crisis must not be passed on to workers either. What is needed are strong and effective collective bargaining systems that involve everyone, and a coordinated approach that spans all phases of life and provides a framework that is poverty-proof and ranges from a minimum income to minimum wages and a minimum pension.

25.8.2020

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty
(2019/2188(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Vilija Blinkevičiūtė

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas equality between women and men and non-discrimination are founding values of the European Union, as expressed in the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- B. whereas equal opportunities deriving from the above-mentioned legislation need to continue to be promoted in order to reduce inequalities;
- C. whereas gender mainstreaming is an important tool for the integration of gender equality in all EU policies, measures and actions, including labour market and social policies to promote equal opportunities and combat all forms of discrimination against women;
- D. whereas the European Pillar of Social Rights includes recommendations on gender equality, equal opportunities and active support to employment;
 1. Notes that the average gender pay gap in the EU stands at 16 %, and the average gender employment gap at 11.5 %, that women are more affected by flexible working arrangements and atypical and flexible contracts (zero-hour contracts, bogus self-employment, temporary work, part-time work, etc.) than men, and that women are more likely to work in highly feminised, low-paid and undervalued sectors than men, to experience poverty and precariousness and to fall into the category of the poorest workers, as well as other intersectional categories such as single parent households, carers for dependents, women with disabilities and women with a limited education or insufficient support from care services; reaffirms that collective bargaining is a decisive factor in reversing and overcoming inequalities;
 2. Notes that, following the global economic and financial crisis in 2008, in-work poverty in the EU increased from 8 % to 10 % and that the current unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic will have greater economic and financial consequences, which will have a direct impact in terms of increasing poverty, especially among women and the most vulnerable groups in society, as its effects will be felt more keenly by workers in the service, tourism, hospitality and care sectors, the self-employed, workers with

precarious working conditions, temporary and seasonal workers, etc., among whom a higher proportion are women, as well as various other economic sectors that will be impacted by job losses, wage and/or working time reductions and increased care service needs during the pandemic;

3. Highlights that an increase in female poverty has a greater impact on wider society as women tend to be mainly responsible for the purchase of basic goods and are key for the sustenance of the household; expresses concern about the impact this will have in terms of child poverty and draws attention to the fact that in 2017, children in the EU faced the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion of any age group; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission's commitment to deliver a 'child guarantee';
4. Is concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent economic downturn will disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups of women, including inter alia single mothers, migrant women and women with low incomes, precarious work and part-time work and will put them at risk of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and/or homelessness; calls on the Commission to integrate a gender perspective into and apply gender mainstreaming in all initiatives and additional EU funding programmes, particularly Next Generation EU and the reinforced 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework, to ensure that the economic policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic is tailored to the specific needs and experiences of women and to propose specific funding to support women in precarious and informal sectors and boost microfinancing for women entrepreneurs;
5. Notes that, although poverty rates among women vary considerably from one Member State to another, the risk of poverty and social exclusion in the risk groups to which older women, single women, women with children and single mothers, refugee and migrant women, women of colour, women from ethnic minorities, homosexual, bisexual and transgender women and women with disabilities belong is high, the average trend being that women are more at risk of poverty and social exclusion than men (22.8 % in 2018 in the EU); notes that other intersectional risk factors such as inactivity, lack of care services for children and dependant family members make some specific categories of women more vulnerable to poverty risks than others;
6. Stresses that one in two people from a non-EU migrant background are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, that levels of precarious work are especially high among migrant and refugee women, and that those with dependent or irregular status face extremely high rates of poverty; stresses that four out of five members of the Roma community have incomes below the poverty threshold and that fewer than one in five Roma women (aged 16 and over) are in employment; highlights that discrimination in access and quality of education, training and employment contribute to this reality; calls on the EU to work with the Member States to ensure the full implementation of EU and national employment standards without discrimination of any kind, including through monitoring, complaints and redress mechanisms that are effective, independent and accessible to all workers;
7. Points out that, according to Eurostat, there are currently 64.6 million women and 57.6 million men living in poverty in the Member States, which shows that the impact of poverty on women and men is different; notes that those numbers show just how many women are affected, and must be examined alongside other indicators, such as age, life

expectancy, income inequalities, the gender pay gap, household type and social transfers to understand their full significance; stresses that women's exposure to poverty is likely to be understated and calls on the Member States to collect poverty data in a way that reflects a person's household and individual reality, together with relevant equality data, and to conduct gender analyses of poverty statistics and policies, as one cannot assume that resources are equally shared among men and women within households;

8. Considers prostitution to be a serious form of violence and exploitation affecting mostly women and children; calls on the Member States to adopt specific measures to combat the economic, social and cultural causes of prostitution and support measures for people who are prostituted to facilitate their social and professional reintegration;
9. Notes with concern that poverty among women increases with age, mainly as a result of the accumulation of various inequalities experienced throughout their working lives (unpaid care work, due to motherhood and other care responsibilities), life-long differences in pay and working time, with women more often having interrupted, atypical or part-time careers, resulting in lower pensions, different retirement ages for men and women in some Member States, and the fact that more older women live alone; notes with regret that the gender pension gap stands at around 39 %, more than double the gender pay gap, revealing that the impact of pay inequalities gradually increases over time; calls on the Member States and the Commission to work together to establish an EU framework for minimum income schemes and to implement specific measures to combat the risk of poverty and social exclusion for older women by raising women's pensions to match those of men and maintaining fair and solidarity-based social security systems in order to ensure a fair and decent income after a lifetime of work;
10. Stresses that in-work poverty can be addressed at some of its root causes and components, such as education, training and care services, which are determinant and must therefore be considered in policy-making;
11. Stresses that female poverty is a multifaceted problem directly influenced by the lack of fair valuation of work typically carried out by women, the impact of career breaks on promotion and pension advancement, unequal access to secure employment contracts and quality working conditions, unequal sharing of unpaid caring responsibilities and domestic work and segregation in education and subsequently in the labour market, resulting in women accounting for the largest share of low-paid workers; notes, therefore, that in order to reduce persisting inequalities and the feminisation of poverty, actions and policies have to be promoted in various fields and steps ranging from improving education to ensuring that high-quality childcare is accessible, affordable and available need to be taken to systematically address the gender employment gap and labour market segregation; reiterates, in that respect, its call on Member States to swiftly transpose and fully implement the Work-life Balance Directive;
12. Calls on the Commission to introduce further initiatives that favour the creation of jobs for women, especially for women facing multiple forms of discrimination, with a view not just to reducing poverty, but also to promoting quality of employment and their financial independence, avoiding job precariousness;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce initiatives to promote women's empowerment through education, vocational training and lifelong learning, as

well as access to finance, female entrepreneurship and women's representation in future-oriented sectors with a view to ensuring access to high-quality employment; calls, in particular, for greater promotion of STEM subjects, digital education, artificial intelligence and financial literacy in order to combat prevailing stereotypes and ensure that more women enter these sectors and contribute to their development;

14. Highlights the regular dialogue with women facing poverty and decision makers through forums at national, regional and EU level to monitor the effectiveness of current policies/services and suggest solutions;
15. Notes that 70 % of the members of the global health and social workforce, such as doctors, nurses and care workers, are women; calls on the Commission and the Member States to target public investment to meet the needs of women health service providers, such as protective gear including sanitary products, and to significantly level up wages and working conditions in female-dominated sectors;
16. Underlines the necessity to ensure adequate financing for NGOs and emphasise the need for them to access EU funds in order to deliver innovative and effective services to fight poverty;
17. Notes that the vast majority of shopkeepers, their employees and cleaners are women and are often only paid the minimum wage, and notes, furthermore, that the COVID-19 pandemic has put them at even greater risk of poverty; underlines the urgent need for extended rights to paid leave, teleworking, part-time work and improved social protection for women who are in precarious employment or have already lost their jobs and the urgent need to establish socio-economic safety nets for women in precarious employment or with precarious contracts;
18. Underlines the need to ensure access to childcare for all types of parents and families working in essential services and increase support for vulnerable families, including those caring for family members with disabilities;
19. Calls on the Commission to set out an EU-level response to extend support to small and medium-sized women-led businesses during and after the crisis;
20. Calls on the Commission to come forward as soon as possible with proposals to close the gender pay and pension gaps, among others, by championing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and welcomes its commitment to present a proposal on binding pay transparency measures before 2021, as stated in the 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy, as well as to inter alia revise the Barcelona targets and explore pension credits for care-related career breaks, all of which will help to address gendered poverty and promote equal opportunities and the participation of women in the labour market; further calls on the Commission to present a timely revision of Directive 2006/54/EC (the Equal Treatment Directive) and to include the prohibition of any discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender reassignment;
21. Calls on the Commission to come forward, as soon as possible, with an ambitious post-2020 European Disability Strategy that includes proposals to ensure the awareness of legal rights, including the right to work and the right to employment of persons with disabilities and measures to encourage their integration into the labour market and promote equal opportunities, with special attention on the situation faced by women

with disabilities and ways to address intersectional forms of discrimination;

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to systematically examine and address all of the causes and forms of female in-work poverty;
23. Regrets that workers in the care sector are often particularly vulnerable due to poor working conditions and a lack of adequate social and labour protections, especially domestic care workers, and that their role has traditionally been undervalued; calls on the Commission to adopt an EU care strategy, responding to the social impacts on those with caring responsibilities, who are disproportionately women; stresses that this strategy should require significant investment in the care economy, strengthen policies to balance work and care responsibilities throughout a person's life and fill labour shortages, in particular through training, the recognition of skills and better working conditions in these sectors.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	25.6.2020
Result of final vote	+: 28 -: 3 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Christine Anderson, Simona Baldassarre, Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Annika Bruna, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Frances Fitzgerald, Cindy Franssen, Helène Fritzon, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Livia Járóka, Arba Kokalari, Alice Kuhnke, Karen Melchior, Andželika Anna Możdżanowska, Maria Noichl, Pina Picierno, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Samira Rafaela, Evelyn Regner, Diana Riba i Giner, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Christine Schneider, Jessica Stegrud, Isabella Tovaglieri, Ernest Urtasun, Hilde Vautmans, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou
Substitutes present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Elena Kountoura, Aušra Maldeikienė

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

28	+
GUE/NGL	Elena Kountoura, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
ID	Isabella Adinolfi
PPE	Rosa Estarás Ferragut, Frances Fitzgerald, Cindy Franssen, Livia Járóka, Arba Kokalari, Aušra Maldeikienė, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Christine Schneider, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi
Renew	Karen Melchior, Samira Rafaela, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Hilde Vautmans, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou
S&D	Robert Biedrón, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Heléne Fritzon, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Maria Noichl, Pina Picierno, Evelyn Regner
Verts/ALE	Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Alice Kuhnke, Diana Riba I Giner, Ernest Urtasun

3	-
ECR	Margarita De La Pisa Carrión, Andželika Anna Mozdżanowska, Jessica Stegrud

4	0
ID	Christine Anderson, Simona Baldassarre, Annika Bruna, Isabella Tovaglierie

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

10/9/2020

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

for the Committee on *Employment* and Social Affairs

on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty
(2019/2188(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Petitions calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that, in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('the Charter'), the EU has an obligation to ensure that all workers enjoy working conditions that respect their health, safety and dignity and calls for attention to be given to the fact that poverty and exclusion from the labour market and society exacerbate inequalities and segregation; recalls the fact that in implementing their policies, the Commission and the Member States should further strengthen the EU's social model and take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of a decent standard of living and adequate social protection for all, the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
2. Recalls that the Member States should ensure a high level of education and training in accordance with Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU); underlines that early school leavers and low-educated young people are expected to remain vulnerable when it comes to future employment, where wage disparities between those who are poorly qualified and those who have received better qualifications, can be expected to increase; stresses that this could potentially generate in-work poverty challenges, and that investment in early childhood education and life-long learning is therefore key in order to improve employability; notes, in this regard, that Upskilling Pathways should offer further opportunities to boost the basic skills of adults and to ensure progress towards achieving the qualifications sought by the labour market;
3. Stresses that the Treaty on European Union sets out that the Union has the basic obligation to work towards Europe's sustainable development, on the basis of, inter alia, a highly competitive social market economy that sets out to achieve full employment and social progress and a high level of protection; stresses that the EU should combat social exclusion and discrimination, and should promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and the protection of the rights of the child;

4. Takes note of the high number of petitions received by the Committee on Petitions, which alert it to the abusive use of fixed-term contracts in both the public¹ and private² sectors and notes in this regard that the most frequently mentioned cause of work stress is job precarity; calls on the Commission to examine these petitions and to provide a better response, in line with its competences and those of the Member States in order to tackle in-work poverty, social exclusion and precarious work effectively;
5. Takes the view that precarious work must be combated through an integrated, multi-level policy package that promotes inclusive and effective labour standards alongside effective measures to ensure that the principle of equality is upheld;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to monitor sectors liable to have a high degree of job insecurity and emphasises the importance of supporting labour inspections following common criteria throughout the EU, to ensure that working conditions are compatible with the Charter and in particular to combat precarious, abusive and irregular employment, including that of posted workers; calls on the Member States to take measures, in line with the 2018 Council recommendation, to ensure that all workers and self-employed persons have access to adequate social protection;
7. Notes that increasing digitalisation, robotisation, use of artificial intelligence and the development of the digital platform economy drive profound changes in the labour market; invites, therefore, the Member States to promote life-long learning policies, skills and competence development throughout life, and to provide education and adequate training programmes for low-skilled workers to prepare them for the challenges of the changing labour market; underlines, in this respect, that digital technologies can be better used to support employers, workers, labour inspectorates and in particular micro and small enterprises, when it comes to managing the changes in work organisation, so as to ensure that workers' best interests are protected;
8. Stresses that new forms of work, including platform work, present not only opportunities in terms of employability and access to the labour market, but also challenges in terms of fair working conditions and access to social protection; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to take special care to ensure that the relevant labour legislation is adhered to with regard to online platform work;
9. Notes with concern that, according to the European Social Policy Network, some 9.4 % of workers in the EU are at risk of poverty, representing some 20.5 million people; highlights the important disparities between the Member States, and underlines the need to establish policies and law at EU level to reverse this situation in order to prevent further social polarisation in the EU; warns that this situation will be aggravated as a result of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 crisis, and urges the Commission and the Member States to protect these workers by taking the necessary measures to preserve their jobs and wages and also their working conditions; underlines, therefore, that while respecting the competences outlined in the TFEU, there is scope for more

¹ These include petitions 0240/18, 0328/18, 0365/18, 0374/18, 0396/18, 0419/18, 0829/2018, 0897/2018, 1161/2018, 0290/19, 0310/2019, 0335/2019, 0579/19, 0624/19, 0652/19, 0683/2019, 0737/2019, 1017/19, 1045/2019, 1241/2019, 1318/2019 and 0036/2020.

² These include petitions 1378/2013, 0019/2016, 0020/2016, 0021/2016, 0099/2017, 1162/2017, 0110/2018 and 0335/2019.

effective policy action by the Commission and the Member States, which is to be focused on the principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights; urges, therefore, the Commission to improve social convergence by introducing a legal instrument that guarantees every worker in the European Union the right to benefit from a fair minimum wage; welcomes the Commission's consultation with social partners on a European framework for minimum wages;

10. Urges the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to sectors with high numbers of precarious contracts;
11. Agrees with the Commission that income inequality in the EU as a world region is lower than in some other major advanced economies, but it remains a concern; stresses that high inequality raises concerns about fairness, as entrenched inequality may result in inequality of opportunity and reduce potential growth; underlines that relatively high inequality may be linked to a higher risk-of-poverty rate and more pronounced social exclusion and a higher incidence of financial distress and, as such, may reduce social cohesion³;
12. Is of the opinion that more emphasis should be placed on values and policies that promote work and its link to improving people's quality of life, and that such values and policies should make meaningful contributions to improve their social and physical environment;
13. In the light of events linked to the COVID-19 crisis, strongly emphasises the need to guarantee cross-border seasonal workers' rights, and the urgent need to establish a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of sanitary and health measures, and therefore urges the Commission to protect all EU workers that may find themselves at any kind of risk – including direct or indirect discrimination;
14. Stresses that women continue to earn 16 % less than men in the EU and have higher rates of job insecurity; stresses, furthermore, that more women have part-time jobs than men and are the majority in sectors such as care, which are also highly undervalued and often unpaid; calls on the Member States to put strategies in place to ensure equality, to take effective measures to reduce the gender pay-gap by applying binding pay transparency measures, to promote equal access to quality employment and to take measures against all forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market and urges the Commission to pay particular attention to the Member States' compliance with EU labour law;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make fighting unemployment and insecure employment of young people a priority and to make full use of financial instruments such as the Youth Guarantee and European programmes such as Erasmus+ in order to tackle youth unemployment and enhance the employability of young people;
16. Urges the Commission to monitor the implementation of the existing acquis and to review the relevant EU labour laws in order to improve the quality and working conditions of workers throughout the Union and to boost opportunities for job creation,

³ Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2019,
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&Id=en&pubId=8219>

while taking into account the fact that the current situation, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, will have a serious and long-lasting impact on the EU labour market, social justice and working conditions; emphasises the need to focus on the groups that are most vulnerable to job insecurity and that are therefore more likely to experience exclusion or social disadvantage;

17. Calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the issue of job precarity, especially in the most vulnerable regions, by guaranteeing a swift and fair allocation of the Just Transition Fund and other available funds, including the European Social Fund +, in order to help with economic transformation, where upskilling, reskilling and investment will be vital and investments in new activities would be of utmost importance;
18. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to launch a debate between employers and unions to make it possible for an in-depth analysis to be conducted in all Member States of the possible reforms needed in the European labour market to prevent workers continuing to be at risk of poverty.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	7.9.2020
Result of final vote	+: 31 -: 0 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Alex Agius Saliba, Andris Ameriks, Marc Angel, Andrus Ansip, Jordan Bardella, Alexander Bernhuber, Markus Buchheit, Ryszard Czarnecki, Eleonora Evi, Agnès Evren, Gheorghe Falcă, Emmanouil Fragkos, Mario Furore, Gianna Gancia, Ibán García Del Blanco, Alexis Georgoulis, Peter Jahr, Radan Kanev, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Dolors Montserrat, Frédérique Ries, Alfred Sant, Monica Semedo, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Yana Toom, Loránt Vincze, Thomas Waitz, Stefania Zambelli, Tatjana Ždanoka, Kosma Złotowski
Substitutes present for the final vote	Pernando Barrena Arza, Ádám Kósa, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

31	+
EPP	Alexander BERNHUBER , Agnès EVREN , Gheorghe FALCĂ , Peter JAHR, Radan KANEV, Ádám KÓSA, Stelios KYMPOUROPOULOS, Dolors MONTSERRAT, Loránt VINCZE
S&D	Alex AGIUS SALIBA, Andris AMERIKS, Marc ANGEL, Ibán GARCÍA DEL BLANCO, Cristina MAESTRE MARTÍN DE ALMAGRO, Alfred SANT, Massimiliano SMERIGLIO
RENEW	Andrus ANSIP, Frédérique RIES, Monica SEMEDO, Yana TOOM, Marie-Pierre VEDRENNE
ID	Jordan BARDELLA
Verts/ALE	Thomas WAITZ, Tatjana ŽDANOKA
ECR	Emmanouil FRAGKOS, Ryszard CZARNECKI, Kosma ZŁOTOWSKI
GUE	Pernando BARRENA ARZA, Alexis GEORGOULIS,
NI	Eleonora EVI, Mario FURORE,

0	-

3	0
ID	Markus BUCHHEIT, Gianna GANCIA, Stefania ZAMBELLI

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	14.1.2021
Result of final vote	+: 29 -: 3 0: 21
Members present for the final vote	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Marc Angel, Dominique Bilde, Gabriele Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Andrea Bocskor, Milan Brglez, Sylvie Brunet, David Casa, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Özlem Demirel, Klára Dobrev, Jarosław Duda, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Nicolaus Fest, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Heléne Fritzon, Elisabetta Gualmini, Alicia Homs Ginel, France Jamet, Agnes Jongerius, Radan Kanev, Ádám Kósa, Stelios Kympouropoulos, Katrin Langensiepen, Miriam Lexmann, Elena Lizzi, Radka Maxová, Kira Marie Peter-Hansen, Dragoş Pîslaru, Dennis Radtke, Elżbieta Rafalska, Guido Reil, Daniela Rondinelli, Mounir Satouri, Monica Semedo, Beata Szydło, Eugen Tomac, Romana Tomc, Yana Toom, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Marianne Vind, Maria Walsh, Stefania Zambelli, Tatjana Ždanoka, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes present for the final vote	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Ilana Cicurel, José Gusmão, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

29	+
EPP	Loucas FOURLAS, Cindy FRANSSEN, Stelios KYMPOUROPOULOS
S&D	Marc ANGEL, Gabriele BISCHOFF, Vilija BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ, Milan BRGLEZ, Klára DOBREV, Estrella DURÁ FERRANDIS, Helène FRITZON, Elisabetta GUALMINI, Alicia HOMES GINEL, Agnes JONGERIUS, Marianne VIND
RENEW	Sylvie BRUNET, Ilana CICUREL, Dragoş PÎSLARU, Monica SEMEDO, Yana TOOM, Marie-Pierre VEDRENNE
GREENS/EFA	Katrin LANGENSIEPEN, Kira Marie PETER-HANSEN, Mounir SATOURI, Tatjana ŽDANOKA
THE LEFT	Konstantinos ARVANITIS, Özlem DEMIREL, José GUSMÃO, Eugenia RODRÍGUEZ PALOP
NI	Daniela RONDINELLI

3	-
ID	Nicolaus FEST, Guido REIL
ECR	Margarita DE LA PISA CARRIÓN

21	0
EPP	Andrea BOCSKOR, David CASA, Jarosław DUDA, Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT, Radan KANEV, Ādám KÓSA, Miriam LEXMANN, Denis RADTKE, Eugen TOMAC, Romana TOMC, Maria WALSH, Tomáš ZDECHOVSKÝ
RENEW	Atidzhe ALIEVA-VELI, Radka MAXOVÁ
ID	Dominique BILDE, France JAMET, Elena LIZZI, Stefania ZAMBELLI
ECR	Lucia ĀURIS̄ NICHOLSONOVÁ, Elżbieta RAFALSKA, Beata SZYDŁO

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention