

**Question for written answer E-002894/2021/rev.1
to the Council**
Rule 138
Guido Reil (ID)

Subject: Principle of subsidiarity

Ahead of the Porto Social Summit of EU heads of state and government, eleven Member States made a declaration in which they emphasised that social policy should remain a national competence.

It states that any action at EU level in the area of social policy should take full account of the division of competences between the EU, its Member States and social partners and that every initiative in this area should respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and pay careful attention to the various national starting points of each Member State¹.

The Commission justifies its proposal for a directive to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women, inter alia, with the following text: 'As demonstrated in the 2020 evaluation, comparable efforts throughout the EU to promote equal pay are not likely to materialise without an initiative at EU level'².

1. Does the Council not consider that only reliable points of reference can legitimise a directive and that the principle of subsidiarity must be respected?
2. Does the Council consider that Commission initiatives must fully respect the principle of subsidiarity, so that social policy remains exclusively a national competence?

¹ Social Summit: Non-paper by Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden.

² European Commission: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms, COM(2021)0093, 4 March 2021.