



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2020)0371

A strong social Europe for Just Transitions

European Parliament resolution of 17 December 2020 on a strong social Europe for Just Transitions (2020/2084(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 3 and 5 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to Articles 9, 151, 152, 153, 156, 157, 162 and 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Protocols 1, 8 and 28 to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular Title IV (Solidarity) thereof,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), proclaimed by the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission in November 2017,
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- having regard to the Paris Agreement reached at COP21 in 2015, and specifically its preamble ‘urging Parties, in implementing their policies and measures, to promote a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities and strategies’,
- having regard to the ILO conventions and recommendations, in particular the Labour Inspection Convention of 1947 (No 81), the ILO Centenary Declaration (2019) and the ILO Guidelines of February 2016 for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 13,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its entry into force in the EU 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 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation¹ (Employment Equality Directive),
- 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 origin²,
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426) and Parliament’s position thereon of 2 April 2009³,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 January 2020 entitled ‘A strong and social Europe for just transitions’ (COM(2020)0014),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 27 May 2020 entitled ‘Europe’s moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation’ (COM(2020)0456),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 27 May 2020 entitled ‘The EU budget powering the recovery plan for Europe (COM(2020)0442),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 27 May 2020 entitled ‘Adjusted Commission Work Programme 2020’ (COM(2020)0440),
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 28 May 2020 for a Council regulation establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (COM(2020)0441),
- 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 crisis⁴,
- having regard to the Commission report of 17 June 2020 on the impact of demographic change (COM(2020)0241),
- having regard to the opinion of the European Committee of the Regions of 18 January 2017 entitled ‘The EU response to the demographic challenge’ (2017/C017/08),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 19 February 2020 entitled ‘Shaping

¹ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

² OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

³ OJ C 137 E, 27.5.2010, p. 68.

⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0176.

Europe's digital future'(COM(2020)0067),

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 1 July 2020 for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (COM(2020)0275),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 1 July 2020 accompanying the proposal for a Council recommendation on 'A Bridge to Jobs - reinforcing the Youth Guarantee' (SWD(2020)0124),
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 10 July 2020 on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States¹,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 8 July 2020 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 as regards the resources for the specific allocation for the Youth Employment Initiative²,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 October 2019 on employment and social policies of the euro area³,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 4 April 2019 on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States⁴,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: employment and social aspects in the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2020,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 December 2019 on the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2020 (COM(2019)0650),
- having regard to the proposal for a joint employment report from the Commission and the Council of 17 December 2019 accompanying the communication on the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2020,
- having regard to Council Decision (EU) 2019/1181 of 8 July 2019 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2019 on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: employment and social aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2019⁶,
- having regard to the 'Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024: A Union that Strives for More', presented by Commission President Ursula von

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0194.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0180.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0033.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0337.

⁵ OJ L 185, 11.7.2019, p. 44.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0202.

der Leyen,

- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 23 January 2019 on ‘Social dialogue for innovation in digital economy’¹,
 - having regard to the Commission’s Spring 2020 Economic Forecast of 6 May 2020,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 18 September 2020 on ‘Decent minimum wages across Europe’,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 15 July 2020 on ‘Recovery plan for Europe and the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027’,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 11 December 2019 on ‘Common Minimum Standards in the field of unemployment insurance in EU Member States – A concrete step towards the effective implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights’²,
 - having regard to the study by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) entitled ‘COVID-19: Policy responses across Europe’,
 - having regard to the Joint Research Centre Technical Report entitled ‘The COVID confinement measures and EU labour markets’, published in 2020 and, in particular, to its analysis of the most recent evidence available of the patterns of telework in the EU,
 - having regard to the revised European Social Charter and to the Turin Process, launched in 2014 with the aim of strengthening the treaty system of the European Social Charter within the Council of Europe as well as its relationship with the law of the European Union,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A9-0233/2020),
- A. whereas sustainable development is a fundamental objective of the European Union; whereas the social market economy is based on two complementary pillars, namely the enforcement of competition and robust social policy measures, which should lead to the achievement of full employment and social progress; whereas the three pillars of sustainable development are the economic, the social and the environmental; whereas sustainable development is based, among other things, on full employment and social progress; whereas this is a fundamental objective of the European Union laid down in Article 3(3) TEU; whereas up till now priority has been given to economic and

¹ OJ C 159, 10.5.2019, p. 1.

² OJ C 97, 24.3.2020, p. 32.

environmental sustainability;

- B. whereas there are emerging challenges that Europe is facing, such as increasing inequalities between generations, diminished social, health, economic and environmental opportunities and resources, territorial disparities, and unequal access to fundamental social and health services, jobs and business opportunities and social infrastructure; whereas reducing inequalities is a shared responsibility of the EU and the Member States; whereas inequalities (of income and of opportunities) have risen in a majority of Member States since the 2008 economic crisis, challenging both the sustainability and inclusiveness of growth and social cohesion, and in this context progress towards the EU 2020 targets has been difficult;
- C. whereas there is a strong and assumed need for just transitions, in Europe and the world, to sustainable resource exploitation, lowering of CO₂ emissions and strong protection of the environment, in order to safeguard the livelihoods, security, health and prosperity of future generations; whereas the transitions towards a stable and sustainable green and environment-friendly economy and social dimension will require cooperation between public and private actors, and must be accompanied by a process of reindustrialisation, modernisation of the industrial base and strengthening of the internal market; whereas the green, digital and demographic transitions affect European regions, sectors, workers and population groups in different ways and these transitions will require significant reskilling and labour reallocation in order to prevent job destruction in affected sectors;
- D. whereas the European regions where there is the greatest need for a sustainable transition are generally also those with high levels of poverty and exclusion; whereas decisive measures and investment are needed for a speedy recovery that should focus on mitigating the economic and social effects of the pandemic, restart economic activity, fostering sustainable development, the green transition and the digital transformation, and implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights in order to achieve more effective and stronger welfare states; whereas an internationally competitive Europe must be based on a strong social Europe in order to create a path to sustainable growth, quality jobs and robust social welfare systems for all;
- E. whereas Eurofound research reveals the complexity of the social dimension of the European Union and suggests complementing the Social Scoreboard accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights with additional indicators covering job quality, social justice and equal opportunities, robust social welfare systems and fair mobility;
- F. whereas the Europe 2020 strategy was launched in 2010 for the promotion of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; whereas the implementation of the Lisbon strategy should have given more priority to sustainability and inclusiveness rather than growth;
- G. whereas, as stated in Article 151 TFEU, the Union and the Member States, having in mind fundamental social rights such as those set out in the European Social Charter signed in Turin on 18 October 1961 and in the 1989 Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, have as objectives the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions so as to make possible their harmonisation while the improvement is being maintained, as well as proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting high employment, and the combating of exclusion; whereas initiatives originating from the European Pillar of Social Rights are a shared

responsibility between the EU and the Member States, which have different social systems and traditions; whereas, therefore, such initiatives should protect national collective bargaining systems, offering higher levels of protection; whereas fundamental rights, proportionality, legal certainty, equality before the law and subsidiarity are general principles of EU law and as such must be respected;

- H. whereas women are under-represented in economic and political leadership positions deciding on the policy responses to COVID-19; whereas women should be included in decision-making to bring in more perspectives, knowledge and experience, which would lead to better policy outputs;
- I. whereas social welfare systems contribute to guaranteeing a decent life; whereas those systems include social security, healthcare, education, housing, employment, justice and social services for disadvantaged groups, and play a key role in achieving social sustainable development, promoting equality and social justice and ensuring the right to social protection as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); whereas social protection policies are vital elements of national development strategies to reduce poverty and vulnerability across the life cycle and to support inclusive and sustainable growth;
- J. whereas social dialogue and collective bargaining are key instruments for employers and trade unions in order to establish fair wages and working conditions, and strong collective bargaining systems increase Member States' resilience in times of economic crisis; whereas societies with strong collective bargaining systems tend to be wealthier and more equal; whereas the right to collective bargaining is an issue that concerns all European workers, which can also have crucial implications for democracy and the rule of law, including respect for fundamental social rights; whereas collective bargaining is a European fundamental right and the EU institutions are bound by Article 28 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights to respect it; whereas, in this context, policies that respect, promote and strengthen collective bargaining and the position of workers in wage-setting systems play a critical role in achieving a high standard of working conditions;
- K. whereas collective bargaining is a key instrument to promote rights at work; whereas, according to OECD data, over the last decades both trade union density and collective bargaining coverage have significantly declined; whereas collective bargaining coverage has been decreasing in 22 of the EU's 27 Member States since 2000; whereas the quality of work and of the working environment is higher on average in countries with well-organised social partners and a large coverage of collective agreements; whereas collective bargaining, provided it has a wide coverage and is well coordinated, fosters good labour market performance;
- L. whereas, according to Eurofound, collective bargaining has come under pressure and the recession of 2008 has resulted in its decentralisation; whereas, while every sixth worker in the EU is estimated to be covered by a collective wage agreement, there is difficulty in obtaining reliable evidence in the form of more in-depth coverage data as regards collective bargaining and collective agreements across the EU; whereas, according to data provided by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), the average level of union membership across the EU is around 23 %, with a great variety in union membership rates between Member States, ranging from 74 % to as low as 8 %; whereas the membership of employers' organisations and the share of the markets they

represent vary significantly as well;

- M. whereas social investment is about investing in people in order to improve their living conditions; whereas key policy areas for social investment include social security, healthcare, long-term care, education, housing, employment, justice and social services for disadvantaged groups; whereas well-designed social policies strongly contribute to sustainable development and growth as well as to protecting people from poverty and acting as economic stabilisers;
- N. whereas the poverty rate is predicted to increase as one of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas women, young people, older people, persons with disabilities and large families are more endangered by this development; whereas the number of single-person households and older people living alone is increasing; whereas single-person households are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion, and, particularly, older women are at higher risk of poverty than older men if they live alone; whereas lone parent households are at high risk of poverty and deprivation, and have difficulties budgeting due to single incomes and lower employment rates; whereas an increasing number of young adults are now relying on the parental home to protect them from poverty, but 29 % of households with three generations are at risk of poverty and 13 % are severely deprived;
- O. whereas gender discrimination in the home and on the labour market can result in an unequal distribution of resources, making women more vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion than men; whereas if they fall into poverty, women have less chance of getting out of it;
- P. whereas both horizontal and vertical labour market segregation in the EU are still significant, with women over-represented in less profitable sectors; whereas in particular women with precarious contracts have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as they were the first to lose their jobs, resulting in financial consequences for their families and for their economic independence, as well as leading to them receiving insufficient social security protection in times of crisis;
- Q. whereas in 2018 there were nearly 109 million persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU-27, equivalent to 21,7 % of the total population, with 23 million being children¹; whereas the EU did not reach its 2020 target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 20 million; whereas the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is likely to increase within the Union as a result of the COVID-19 crisis; whereas homelessness has increased by 70 % consistently in most Member States over the past decade, with at least 700 000 people being without shelter on any given night in the EU; whereas COVID-19 has demonstrated that homelessness represents both a social and a public health crisis²; whereas about one-fifth of people in the EU are at risk of severe indebtedness and many do not receive the social benefits to which they are entitled under their national systems;

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10163468/3-16102019-CP-EN.pdf/edc3178f-ae3e-9973-f147-b839ee522578>

² https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/resources/Rapport_Europe_2020_GB.pdf

- R. whereas one in five workers in the EU holds a poor quality job; whereas it is expected that in the next decade, job polarisation and non-standard forms of employment will increase further and there will be more jobs at the higher and lower ends of the skills spectrum¹; whereas technological change and the use of artificial intelligence might alter the labour market significantly; whereas this leads to further disparities in earnings; whereas labour demand has consistently been weakest in the middle of the job-wage distribution, most noticeably during the periods of recession and employment contraction between 2008 and 2013, partly due to employment shifting from the manufacturing and construction sectors to services; whereas this trend is likely to be further reinforced by the pandemic; whereas low-skilled jobs will always be essential for societies and must offer decent pay and conditions; whereas digitalisation can create chances and opportunities for upskilling, but does not necessarily improve working conditions or create new quality jobs for all;
- S. whereas there is hardly any transition from fixed-term to permanent employment contracts; whereas 60 % of workers are trapped involuntarily in fixed-term employment; whereas transition rates are particularly low in countries with high levels of fixed-term employment; whereas even public administrations have too often relied on temporary workers to replace civil servants, with more precarious working conditions;
- T. whereas research by Eurofound on ‘new forms of employment’ shows that emerging and increasingly important employment forms which deviate from traditional employer-employee relationships and/or are characterised by non-traditional work organisation and work patterns, tend to be less covered by social protection, social dialogue and collective bargaining; whereas, as such employment forms are also found to be more intensively used during economically challenging times, interventions should be considered to counter the expected labour market crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- U. whereas the unemployment rate is over 7 %, and the youth unemployment rate has risen to 17 % and is expected to increase further due to COVID-19², concerning especially women and workers in low-skilled positions; whereas the euro area unemployment rate is expected to increase from 8,3 % in 2020 to about 9,3 % in 2021, with substantial differences among Member States³; whereas the unemployment rate of specific groups, such as persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities like the Romani people, young people and elderly people, can be significantly higher; whereas according to Eurofound’s survey ‘Living, Working and COVID-19’, the COVID-19 crisis has had a dramatic impact on the labour market, with 8 % of employees and 13 % of the solo self-employed becoming unemployed since the onset of the pandemic; whereas the impact of the crisis has also been felt by those who remained in the labour market with a considerable decrease in hours worked, which is reflected in loss of income and

¹ Eurofound (2018), Upward convergence in the EU: Concepts, measurements and indicators, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
Eurofound (2017), Sixth European Working Conditions Survey – Overview report (2017 update), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

² Unemployment statistics: Eurostat, July 2020.

³ European Economic Forecast, Autumn 2020, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/ip136_en.pdf

concerns over future labour market participation and financial insecurity;

- V. whereas according to Eurostat, in 2018 there were 8,3 million underemployed part-time workers in the EU-28, 7,6 million persons were available to work but not looking for a job, and another 2,2 million were looking for jobs without being able to start working within a short time period; whereas in total 18,1 million persons experienced something resembling unemployment in the EU-28 in 2018;
- W. whereas the fight against unemployment of young people as well as the elderly remains one of the greatest challenges at regional level in the EU;
- X. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has brought to light abuses regarding the rights of cross-border, frontier and seasonal workers and the precariousness of their situation, with low levels of social protection and social security coordination; whereas there is therefore a need for stronger regulation, more efficient monitoring and effective enforcement of decent working conditions, as well as housing conditions and health and safety at work; whereas the Temporary Agency Work Directive has to be improved in this aspect;
- Y. whereas the gap in employment participation between men and women was 11,7 % in 2019; whereas this differential has a huge economic cost for the EU, corresponding to EUR 320 billion per year, or 2,37 % of EU GDP; whereas the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affects women's labour and social situation, with 26,5 % of women being in precarious jobs, representing 60 % of part-time workers; whereas women are more affected than men by the difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to the employment sectors in which they are prevalent and the burden of caring for children and the elderly, which still weighs particularly heavily on their shoulders;
- Z. whereas persons with disabilities and the elderly are particularly susceptible to the COVID-19 crisis; whereas they are likely to suffer disproportionately and to have particular support needs that must be taken into account from the very outset when responding to the pandemic, with research showing that these groups are at high risk of developing mental health problems;
- AA. whereas Europe's regions are facing long-term demographic trends, from longer life expectancy to lower birth rates, ageing societies, shrinking workforce, smaller households and increasing urbanisation; whereas Europe's declining share of the global population, with it being expected to account for less than 4 % by 2070, will bring challenges; whereas rural and peripheral areas are strongly affected by demographic changes;
- AB. whereas the pandemic has particularly affected the elderly, in some cases aggravating the situation of those who are isolated; whereas the elderly are most at risk of lack of access to the internet and modern technologies, and are consequently at a higher risk of exclusion, including digital exclusion;
- AC. whereas the crisis has resulted in rising urban poverty, affecting more middle-income households and creating new at-risk groups, and is leading to deepening territorial inequalities, exacerbating social disadvantages in deprived urban areas as well as unequal access to public services and generating increasing demand for social services and social infrastructure at local level, at a time when local budgets are overstretched;

- AD. whereas research based on the 2015 European Working Conditions Survey shows that twice as many regular teleworkers report working in excess of the 48 hours stipulated in EU legislation and resting for less than 11 hours between working days, as compared to those working on their employers' premises; whereas almost 30 % of such teleworkers report working in their free time every day or several times a week, compared to below 5 % of office-based workers; whereas regular teleworkers are also more likely to report suffering from work-related stress, being affected by sleep disorders and struggling to reconcile work and family responsibilities;
- AE. whereas as a result of COVID-19 and the measures to tackle it, namely confinement and teleworking, women in abusive relationships have become permanently exposed to violence, which has increased the number of cases of violence against women; whereas one consequence of confinement has been an explosion in gender-based and intra-family violence, by around 30 % in some European countries; whereas, in total, more than 243 million women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced sexual and/or physical violence worldwide in the past 12 months;
- AF. whereas the pressure on women has increased further; whereas the new forms of work imposed, which are extendable and come at the expense of the separation between work and private life, have led during confinement to an explosion of new forms of psychological and sexual harassment, both online and offline; whereas the vast majority of companies and governments have not put in place any measures to counter these phenomena;
1. Highlights that the EU has embarked on a transition towards a low-carbon, climate-neutral, resource-efficient and circular economy that must ensure the highest levels of social justice, increasing wellbeing, social progress, security, prosperity, equality and inclusion and leaving no one behind; believes that sustainable development is deeply rooted in the European project and European values, and that social sustainability is a fundamental prerequisite for fair and inclusive green, digital and demographic transitions; insists that, in order to reduce inequalities, these processes must be framed in a transition that can offer social opportunities and shared prosperity; stresses that social justice, decent work with living wages, equal opportunities, fair mobility and robust social welfare systems are essential elements in the just transition to a sustainable and social Europe;
 2. Believes that this recovery period must be the time for reforms fully committed to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on solidarity, integration, social justice, a fair distribution of wealth, gender equality, high-quality public social welfare systems, quality employment and sustainable growth - a model that ensures equality and social protection, takes into consideration the needs of vulnerable groups, enhances participation and citizenship and improves living standards for all; considers this to be the best way for an EU to emerge from this crisis that is more sustainable, more resilient and fairer for the next generation;
 3. Emphasises that progress towards a sustainable, fair and inclusive social Europe requires a strong shared commitment, both to the advancement of the UN 2030 Agenda and to the implementation and materialisation of the principles and rights contained in the European Pillar of Social Rights; highlights that an ambitious political agenda with identifiable, feasible, sustainable, clear and mandatory targets and indicators of social sustainability must be designed; points out that the next EU Social Summit planned for

May 2021 in Porto would be the perfect opportunity for adoption of this agenda at the highest political level by the leaders of the 27 Member States and of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission; calls for the involvement of social partners throughout the process;

Governance framework for social progress

4. Considers that the Porto agenda should take a double approach, i.e. it should focus on the social sustainability part of the EU's Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda, while at the same time paving the way for the materialisation of the EPSR principles through adopting an Action Plan as well as serving as a follow-up to the Lisbon strategy, setting ambitious and mandatory targets and instruments defining the road to social progress and sustainability; believes that this agenda could contain the strategic framework for a sustainable, fair and inclusive social Europe for 2030;
5. Stresses that the goals of a new agenda for a strong social Europe must focus on protecting everyone and especially the most vulnerable and on making the recovery inclusive and socially just, and that these goals must be reinforced through mandatory enforceability, taking into account national specificities and needs and mirroring economic and environmental obligations whose observance is linked to access to European funds; considers that, in this sense, EU and Member States' policy actions, programmes and reforms should be designed in a way that would contribute to the achievement of these mandatory objectives and that legal protection should imply that actions, policies, programmes or reforms that could have a potential negative impact on or hamper the progress towards the achievement of these objectives should be prevented;
6. Is convinced that a governance framework for a social and sustainable Europe should be anchored in the following reforms: the integration of the EPSR and a social progress protocol in the Treaties, protecting social rights at the same level as economic freedoms in the single market, and the adoption of a Sustainable Development and Social Progress Pact making social and sustainable targets mandatory, in order to achieve the UN SDGs; considers that, additionally, the Semester process should follow the Community method and be agreed between the Council and the European Parliament, while more social policy areas should fall under the qualified majority decision process, in particular non-discrimination, social protection of workers (apart from cross-border situations), protection of workers whose employment contract has been terminated, the representation and collective defence of the interests of workers and employers, and conditions of employment for third-country nationals legally residing in the EU;

Financial means for a strong social and sustainable Europe

7. Calls on the Member States to make full use of flexibility in the application of EU rules on public finances and fiscal policies, in order to accommodate exceptional spending so as to prevent and mitigate the social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, strengthen social welfare systems, and finance quality jobs, public services, the fight against poverty and the green and digital transitions; welcomes NextGenerationEU, the EU's recovery plan; stresses that just green and digital transitions can only be achieved with appropriate support for education and social care and healthcare infrastructure, in order to ensure social fairness, social cohesion and prosperity for all; is concerned that, in the current crisis, social welfare systems are experiencing unprecedented pressure

and that related public expenditure will increase exponentially; underlines that the expenditure for the crisis measures should not come at the expense of the least well-off, but should be borne fairly; stresses, therefore, that in order to fuel the recovery, the EU's investment effort through the Recovery Plan must have a strong social dimension, strengthening social welfare systems and investing in social security, access to healthcare and education, affordable housing, employment, justice and social services for vulnerable groups, in order to combat the social impact of the crisis; considers that investment in education, well-designed progressive tax and benefit systems, social investment and the provision of quality public and social services are essential levers for preventing the transfer of disadvantage from one generation to the next; stresses the importance of the implementation of the EPSR in the context of the European Recovery Plan and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, at the same level as the Green Deal and the digital transition; calls, therefore, for the upcoming reforms linked to the recovery package to include upward social convergence as one of the main objectives of the national reform programmes, including through financial support; in this sense, believes that the new Porto 2030 targets should be supported in the Recovery Plan, alongside the economic and environmental targets;

8. Highlights that social investment in the recovery package should match the Porto Agenda targets in ambition, in order to provide the necessary financial support as well; believes that specific Social Progress Plans (SPPs) should outline how the Porto Agenda targets and the EPSR principles will be implemented, the size of the social investments, the areas in question, and the progress results aimed for;
9. Recalls that short-time work schemes are an effective tool to safeguard jobs during an economic crisis; welcomes the establishment of the Instrument for Temporary Support to Mitigate Employment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) as an emergency measure to support Member States' short-time work schemes in the context of the COVID-19 crisis; underlines that this is a key instrument to support national short-time work schemes, thus making it possible to safeguard jobs and skills and to preserve a large proportion of wages and incomes; invites the Commission to carefully evaluate the performance of this temporary instrument and examine the possible introduction of a permanent special instrument in this respect, to be activated – upon request by Member States – in case of any unexpected crisis that leads to a steady rise in expenditure for short-time work schemes and similar measures; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that financial assistance is provided only to undertakings that are not registered in the countries listed in the common EU list of third-country jurisdictions for tax purposes or in Annex 1 of 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; stresses the importance of combining short-time work programmes with education and professional training for the affected workers;
10. Welcomes the announcement by the President of the European Commission proposing an EU Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme, and urges the Commission to present its proposal; calls for this instrument to protect all types of workers, reduce pressure from external shocks on public finances, and safeguard national unemployment

benefit systems during crises that lead to a sudden rise in expenditure; calls for this proposal to cover EMU countries with the possibility of non-EMU countries also joining;

11. Welcomes the introduction of a Just Transition Fund; stresses that broad social acceptance of environmental protection and climate action measures is vital for their effective implementation; urges Member States to effectively involve social partners, regional and local government and civil society in the elaboration of Territorial Just Transition Plans; recalls that climate change and the subsequent structural changes are already having a severe impact on many European regions and their people; stresses that the creation of green and decent jobs is crucial in order to achieve an inclusive and balanced job market to accompany the fair and just transition towards a renewables-based, highly resource- and energy-efficient, circular and carbon-neutral economy and to make sure no one is left behind; insists on increasing the amount put forward in May 2020 for the Just Transition Fund by the Commission in its amended proposal; calls for the fund to have sufficient financial means to support regions in transition and to ensure that new quality jobs are created and that social cohesion is the guiding principle for providing support under the fund; stresses that the revised European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is pivotal in supporting social plans for workers hit by restructuring, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to agree to a substantially increased budget for this instrument as part of the broader European Just Transition financial support; calls for sustainable and ambitious use of the funds available in order to support those regions which are most vulnerable and are lagging behind, by using transitional measures where needed; recalls the importance of eligible projects being consistent with the climate neutrality objective for 2050 and its intermediate steps up to 2030, as well as with the European Pillar of Social Rights;
12. Stresses the changes that just transition brings to the labour market and the distribution of the new green jobs; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop strategies to ensure women's access to new green jobs and to reduce the gender gap in employment in the renewable energy sector;
13. Recalls that, before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 100 million Europeans were struggling with poverty and material deprivation on a daily basis and that the situation will deteriorate further as a result of the crisis; recognises the crucial role of all European funds and programmes in the social area and the even more essential role the future ESF+ and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) will play in the next 7 years; stresses that the recovery efforts should boost jobs and growth and the resilience and fairness of our societies, and should be complemented by a strong social dimension, addressing social and economic inequalities and the needs of those hit hardest by the crisis, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as those in poverty, the unemployed, the elderly, young people, persons with disabilities, single parents, mobile workers and migrants; welcomes the Commission's undertaking to mobilise the EGF in response to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the social and economic level, and stresses that extending the scope of the EGF to digital and green transitions will require sufficient funding for the years to come; calls on the Member States to make full use of this fund in order to accompany the displaced workers in these transitions;
14. Is concerned that in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak, the need to tackle poverty, including child poverty, will become imminent in the coming years;

underlines that Member States should allocate at least 5 % of the European Social Fund (ESF+) resources under shared management to support activities under the European Child Guarantee (ECG); stresses that it is essential that a separate budget of EUR 3 billion is created for the first year of its implementation, with the EU suffering the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which will have an ever greater impact on children as the most vulnerable group among the most disadvantaged, and that a total of at least EUR 20 billion is invested in the ECG in the period 2021-2027; urges that this be complemented by a comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy including measures ensuring decent and affordable housing and tackling homelessness; recalls that any strategy to eradicate child poverty must take into account the reality of single parenthood and families with large numbers of children, given that single-parent households and households with many children are among the vulnerable groups in society; also underlines that Member States should allocate at least 3 % of the ESF+ resources under shared management, in order to tackle food and material deprivation as well as supporting the social inclusion of the most deprived;

15. Highlights that the COVID-19 crisis has already left many people jobless, especially young people who find themselves more often in precarious employment; welcomes in this context the Commission's plans to strengthen the European Youth Guarantee, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the fight against youth unemployment a priority; highlights that it is necessary that Member States continue to invest sufficient ESF+ resources in measures to support youth employment and that they must therefore allocate at least 15 % of their ESF+ resources under shared management to targeted actions and structural reforms to support quality youth employment; recalls the need for a binding, more effective and inclusive Youth Guarantee that provides remunerated traineeships, apprenticeships, and internships, for all groups of people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), within a clear quality criteria framework governing the Youth Guarantee; condemns the practice of unpaid internships when not related to the obtention of educational qualifications, as a form of exploitation of young workers and a violation of their rights; calls on the Commission to put forward a legal framework for an effective and enforceable ban on such unpaid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships;

The Porto Agenda: targets and proposals

16. Believes that the Porto Agenda, as a strong Social Europe agenda for sustainable development, should encompass economic, social and environmental wellbeing indicators and should cover the following areas: decent work, social justice and equal opportunities, robust social welfare systems and fair mobility; considers that, in order to achieve more tangible results, this new agenda should combine quantitative and qualitative targets and should be anchored in a rights-based approach;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively tackle the digital divide in access to public services, many of which have been digitalised during COVID-19, by ensuring EU financial support for social innovation at local level for making public services more easily accessible, including capacity-building and the scaling up of innovative bottom-up initiatives for e-inclusion and data literacy, so as to ensure that all citizens have access to high-quality, accessible and user-friendly services of general interest;

1. Decent work and sustainable and inclusive labour markets

18. Notes that decent wages are a key element of fair working conditions and for a thriving social market economy, and that wage levels should enable workers to meet their needs and those of their families; believes that every worker in the EU should receive a wage which ensures at least a decent standard of living; believes that strengthened collective bargaining is the best way to promote decent wages within the EU; calls on the Commission to identify barriers to collective bargaining within the EU and takes note of the proposal for a directive on minimum wages and collective bargaining; underlines that this directive should contribute to eliminating in-work poverty and promote collective bargaining, in line with national traditions and with due respect for the autonomy of national social partners and well-functioning collective bargaining models; reiterates its call on the Commission to carry out a study on a living wage index, in order to estimate the cost of living and the approximate income needed to meet a household's basic needs for each Member State and region, since this could serve as a reference tool for social partners; insists that statutory minimum wages are set at a level above a decency threshold, with the full involvement of social partners, as this contributes to eliminating in-work poverty, guaranteeing an income for every worker above the poverty level while taking into account the variations in costs of living within Member States; calls for a coordinated approach at EU level in order to achieve real wage growth, avoid the downward spiral of unhealthy labour cost competition, and increase upward social convergence for all;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, together with social partners, to commit to reaching collective bargaining coverage of 90 % by 2030 in those national systems that combine statutory and social partners' regulation of employment and working conditions; stresses that collective bargaining contributes to the social market economy, as aimed for in the Lisbon Treaty; reiterates that the European treaties, which explicitly protect the autonomy of social partners, and the self-regulatory systems in place in some Member States, must be protected in order for social partners to regulate autonomously, ensuring strong legitimacy and collective agreement coverage progress; calls on the Member States to remove any national legislation that hampers collective bargaining, including by ensuring trade unions' access to workplaces for the purpose of organising; underlines that reforms in Member States should not negatively affect collective bargaining and that it needs to be promoted at sectoral level, including by supporting the capacity-building of social partners; urges the Commission and the Member States to fully involve social partners in European policymaking, including in the European Semester process; believes that the proposed targets would contribute to the eradication of in-work poverty and to ensuring fair wages for European workers;
20. Calls on the Commission to revise the European public procurement directive in order to establish preferential treatment for companies complying with collective bargaining agreements; also calls on the Commission to strengthen the social clause and exclude from tenders companies which have engaged in criminal activities or union-busting or have refused to participate in collective bargaining, ensuring that public money is used to invest in those engaged in Just Transitions with the aim of promoting collective agreements and increasing trade union densities; considers furthermore that all EU financial support to undertakings should be made conditional on their compliance with the applicable working and employment conditions and/or employer obligations resulting from the relevant collective agreements; urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure that public service institutions, whether privately or publicly managed, provide decent working conditions for their staff, respecting in particular the freedom to negotiate and conclude collective sectoral or company-level agreements and

the right to adequate wages;

21. Notes with great concern the high level of youth unemployment in a number of Member States and the fragility of young workers' employment contracts, particularly in sectors seriously impacted by COVID-19; calls for a reinforced Youth Guarantee Instrument with the objective of reducing long-term and youth unemployment by at least 50 % by 2030, also including criteria for quality job creation in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 8 of the UN's 2030 Agenda; believes it is time to make the Youth Guarantee both binding for all Member States and inclusive, including active outreach measures towards long-term NEETs and young persons from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, such as young persons with disabilities and young Romani people;
22. Stresses that a European agenda for quality jobs is not only a question of decency, but is also good for the economy as it improves productivity and boosts internal demand; considers that a quality job must include a living wage, job security and access to social protection, lifelong learning opportunities, good working conditions in safe and healthy workplaces, reasonable working time with a good work-life balance, and trade union representation and bargaining rights; calls on the Commission to include the overall objective of raising work quality at the European level in the Semester process and the Social Scoreboard, with a view to guiding and assessing the contribution of employment policies across Member States to the implementation of the SDGs and the EPSR; calls on the Member States to give the social and employment-related Country Specific Recommendations, especially those issued in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the same importance as they give to the economic and budgetary ones;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the revision of the EU Employment Guidelines no later than one year after their adoption in 2020, in order to take into account the COVID-19 crisis and its social and employment consequences, and to respond better to similar future crises; insists that, in order to strengthen democratic decision-making, the European Parliament must be involved in defining the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, on an equal footing with the Council; calls on Eurofound to contribute to the measurement of job quality in different contractual and employment settings and to provide policy-relevant analyses to assist the improvement of job quality and make work sustainable;
24. Is concerned about the increased number of workers in precarious and non-standard forms of employment, bogus self-employed and workers with zero-hour contracts, including in national public administrations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to work towards the objective of eliminating involuntary temporary and involuntary part-time employment by 2030 and towards the target of 80 % of jobs created being middle- or high-paying and concentrated in sustainable sectors; urges the Commission and the Member States to eliminate the practices of zero-hour contracts and bogus self-employment;
25. Calls on the Member States to commit to eliminating work-related deaths and reducing work-related illnesses by 2030; urges the Commission to come up with a new Occupational Health and Safety strategy, tackling both physical and mental health of workers, in order to achieve this aim; believes that this strategy must include the revision of the health and safety framework directive in order to protect workers during emergency situations like pandemics, as well as ambitious legislative proposals on

musculoskeletal and stress-related disorders, in cooperation with social partners; calls on the Commission to continue to update the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD) and propose Binding Occupational Exposure Limit Values (BOELs) for a minimum of an additional 50 substances by 2024, and to include substances with damaging effects on the reproductive system in the Directive and introduce stricter limit values on harmful substances such as carcinogens and mutagens; stresses that the EU must follow up on the European Framework for Action on Mental Health; notes that one of the targets is also the prevention of cancer, as 40 % of cancers are considered to be preventable; calls on the Commission to present an ambitious Beating Cancer Plan to help reduce the suffering caused by this disease; calls for the role of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work to be strengthened in order to promote healthy and safe workplaces across the Union and further develop initiatives to improve workplace prevention in all sectors of activity;

26. Calls on the Commission to present a strategic EU care agenda as a further step forward in qualitatively empowering the healthcare sector in the EU, including personal and household services workers; reiterates that the care agenda needs also to reflect the situation of the 100 million informal carers in the EU, who provide 80 % of long-term care but remain mostly unrecognised; calls on the Commission, in coordination with the Member States, to develop a regulatory framework that guarantees quality care services, including assessing new opportunities in the healthcare sector benefiting consumers and patients, while respecting the role of public and private institutions in the provision of services to citizens and ensuring decent working conditions for carers;
27. Acknowledges that fair, socially sustainable work and real employee participation in shaping working conditions are more important than ever, in digital platforms as in all other sectors, and that workers must have democratic influence over the governance of work; underlines that the benefits of digitalisation must be shared broadly and equitably and that workers in the digital sector must enjoy the same rights and working conditions as those in other sectors; calls on the Commission to propose a directive on decent working conditions and rights in the digital economy, covering all workers, including non-standard workers on atypical contracts, workers in platform companies and the self-employed; calls on the Commission to ensure in this directive that platform businesses comply with the existing national and European legislation, to clarify the employment status of platform-based workers through the rebuttable assumption of an employment relationship and to safeguard their working conditions, social protection and health and safety, as well as their right to organise, to be represented by trade unions and to negotiate collective agreements, including for the self-employed; urges the Commission to come up with a targeted revision of EU competition law so as to allow collective price-setting for the precarious self-employed, in order to ensure a better balance in bargaining power and a fairer internal market;
28. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of digital solutions, particularly teleworking; urges the Commission to present a directive on minimum standards and conditions for fair teleworking, to protect the health and safety of workers and to ensure decent working conditions, including its voluntary nature, respect for working hours, leave, work-life balance and other digital rights at work such as the right to disconnect, the protection of workers' privacy, including through remote monitoring or any other tracking, and the prohibition of microchip implants on workers and of the use of artificial intelligence in recruitment processes, while taking into consideration the European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation;

29. Calls on the Commission to introduce a new framework directive on workers' information, consultation and participation for European company forms, including subcontracting chains and franchises, and for companies that use European company mobility instruments, in order to establish minimum standards including on anticipation of change and restructuring, in particular at company level; also calls for a revision of the European Works Council (EWC) directive to ensure inter alia proper enforcement, access to justice and effective sanctions for violation of the rules and improve the functioning of the special negotiating body, including a transnational information and consultation process, to be properly conducted and completed before any decisions are taken; calls on the Commission to promote employee share ownership, as a tool to enhance the inclusion of workers by improving democracy at work, while reducing inequality as well as the risk of job losses during downturns;
30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish the necessary conditions and requirements in order to have at least 80 % of corporations covered by sustainable corporate governance agreements by 2030, establishing strategies agreed with workers in order to positively influence environmental, social and economic development through governance practices and market presence, improve directors' accountability as regards integrating sustainability into corporate decision-making, and promote corporate governance practices that contribute to company sustainability, with reference inter alia to corporate reporting, board remuneration, maximum wage ratio difference, board composition and stakeholder involvement;
31. Calls for a directive on binding human rights, due diligence and responsible business conduct, including workers' rights such as the right of association, the right to collective bargaining and the right to health and safety, social protection and good working conditions, establishing mandatory due diligence covering companies' activities and their business relationships, including supply and subcontracting chains; stresses that this directive should ensure the full involvement of trade unions and workers' representatives in the whole due diligence process and should guarantee the right to reach collective agreement at the relevant levels on the due diligence policies; underlines that both national labour inspectorates and the European Labour Authority (ELA) must be able to conduct joint inspections throughout the chain, open to filing complaints, and able to offer support for compliance, in relation to all EU companies and companies wanting to access the internal market; calls on the Commission to insist on the ratification of ILO Conventions 81 (labour inspection) and 129 (labour inspection in agricultural sector) by all trading partners of the EU;
32. Encourages the Commission to take into account the specificity of social economy enterprises, which are proving to be very important for society during the pandemic, and to evaluate the development of specific programmes and financial instruments; calls on the Commission to update its framework for the establishment and development of cooperatives and social economy enterprises, which by their nature place a stronger emphasis on fair working conditions and empowerment of workers;
33. Underlines that effective enforcement is essential for the protection of workers and implementation of social rights; regrets that most Member States are falling behind on their commitment to the ILO Labour Inspection Convention with regard to the number of labour inspectors; insists that Member States increase their enforcement capacity so as to achieve a ratio of at least one labour inspector per 10 000 employed persons, by 2030 at the latest;

2. Social justice and equal opportunities

34. Stresses that eradicating child poverty and ensuring wellbeing and equal opportunities for children must be among the highest priorities for Europe; calls on the Commission and the Member States to speed up the adoption and implementation of the European Child Guarantee so that by 2030 every child in the EU has full access to quality and free healthcare, education and childcare, is living in decent housing and receives adequate nutrition; notes that this policy must be integrated with other measures targeting poverty and family policy in order to lead to well-rounded policy cycles able to offer opportunities for social inclusion to children and their families, including national and local strategies to fight child poverty, taking into account the specific challenges faced by different groups of children in need at local level;
35. Condemns the use of the pandemic as a pretext for some governments to backslide on some of the fundamental rights of workers and women; recalls the inalienable right to access to healthcare, as well as the right to have self-determination over one's own body; highlights, therefore, that reproductive healthcare, contraception and abortion rights must be guaranteed, including by an extension of the legal timeframe for an abortion;
36. Welcomes the Council conclusions on strengthening minimum income protection to combat poverty and social exclusion; invites the Commission to further develop on these conclusions, proposing a framework for minimum income schemes, with the purpose of safeguarding the right to a decent life and eradicating poverty and addressing the questions of adequacy and coverage, including a non-regression clause; underlines that every person in Europe should be covered by a minimum income scheme and that pensions should ensure an income above the poverty line;
37. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to commit to eliminating the gender pay gap, which is currently 16 % - and the resulting pension gap - with a 0 % target for 2030, by championing the principle of equal pay for equal work for women and men; calls on the Commission to urgently present a legal framework on pay transparency, as originally promised for its first 100 days, including pay transparency reporting and information on pay levels; reiterates that the gender pension gap also results from inadequate pension schemes which do not appropriately take into account periods of maternity or parental leave; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take long-term measures to reduce the high unemployment rates among women and ensure women's participation in the labour market, to ensure 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;
38. Calls on the Commission to introduce concrete measures applying to both public and private sectors with due account taken of the specificities of small and medium-sized enterprises, such as the clear definition of criteria for assessing the value of work, gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems, gender pay audits and reports to guarantee equal pay, workers' entitlement to request full pay information and right to redress, and clear targets for companies' equality performance; calls furthermore for improved access to justice and the introduction of stronger procedural rights to combat pay discrimination; calls on the Commission to promote the role of the social partners and of collective bargaining at all levels (national, sectoral, local and company) in the

upcoming pay transparency legislation; calls on the Commission to include strong enforcement measures for those failing to comply, such as penalties and sanctions for employers that violate the right to pay equality;

39. Calls on the Member States to unblock the Women on Boards directive and to adopt an ambitious position in Council in order to address the considerable imbalance between women and men in decision-making at the highest level; calls on the Commission and the Member States to commit to eliminating the glass ceiling effect on the boards of listed companies by introducing the objective of reaching at least 40 % representation of women in senior management positions;
40. Calls on the Commission to put forward a post-2020 European Disability Strategy covering all the provisions of the UNCRPD and containing ambitious, clear and measurable targets, planned actions with clear timeframes and dedicated resources, as well as being backed by an adequate and sufficiently resourced monitoring mechanism with clear benchmarks and indicators also emphasising the need to achieve full accessibility of goods and services, including the built environment, inclusive education and the labour market and to the use of artificial intelligence, in order to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in society, as well as a commitment to the finalisation of the process of deinstitutionalisation of long-term care facilities; calls on the Member States to use resources available from the Cohesion Fund, the ERDF as well as the ESF in particular, in order to improve accessibility to public spaces for persons with special needs, including persons with disabilities, persons with children, and the elderly, who still encounter the problem of social exclusion;
41. Urges that the gender perspective be incorporated into the upcoming 2021 strategy on disability and equality, with due attention being paid to improved access to the labour market through targeted measures and actions;
42. Supports the promotion of inclusive and accessible education, including broadband internet access, and vocational and digital training, including for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities, in order to allow particularly low-skilled and older workers to retrain and learn new skills; supports the creation of EU-wide apprenticeship possibilities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up efforts towards the further inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market by removing barriers using the opportunities that digital work offers for their inclusion and creating incentives for their employment; recalls that according to Eurofound, just one in three workers with limiting chronic and rare diseases have their workplaces suitably adapted; calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue their work of fostering the employment, maintenance at work and reintegration into the labour market of people with disabilities and chronic diseases in Europe;
43. Welcomes the new EU skills agenda; highlights the importance of access to training and reskilling of workers in industries and sectors that need to undergo fundamental changes with a view to a green and digital transition; highlights that qualifications and certified competences provide added value to workers, improving their position in the labour market, and can be transferred in labour market transitions; calls for public policy on skills to be oriented to the certification and validation of qualifications and competences; stresses that skills-based compensation systems should be established in companies accessing public funds for upskilling workers and in agreement with workers' representatives, as this system would ensure that there is a return on that

public investment; stresses that the European skills strategy for sustainable competitiveness, social equity and resilience must guarantee the right to lifelong learning for all and in all areas;

3. Robust social welfare systems

44. Notes that the current investment in social infrastructure in the EU has been estimated at approximately EUR 170 billion per year and that the Commission estimates the investment needed at EUR 192 billion, with health and long-term care accounting for 62 % of that investment (affordable housing, EUR 57 billion; health, EUR 70 billion; long-term care, EUR 50 billion; education and lifelong learning, EUR 15 billion); calls on the Commission and the Member States to dedicate to the implementation of the EPSR principles a proportion of the Recovery and Resilience Facility that is equivalent to the investments in environmental and digital priorities; insists that gender equality is taken into account in the allocation of RRF resources;
45. Calls on the Commission to monitor the European strategy for gender equality 2020-2025, and invites the Member States to adopt national gender equality strategies based on the European strategy, as an important component of the socio-economic measures taken in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis;
46. Stresses, moreover, the need for the Commission and the Member States to collect better and more harmonised data on the number of homeless people in Europe, as this constitutes the basis of any effective public policy;
47. Stresses that the EU and its Member States have an obligation to ensure universal access to decent, safe and affordable housing, in line with the UN's Agenda 2030, in particular Goal 11 and in accordance with fundamental rights such as those defined in Articles 16, 30 and 31 of the European Social Charter and in the European Pillar of Social Rights; calls in that regard on all Member States to ratify the revised European Social Charter; highlights that investment in social, decent and affordable housing is crucial in order to guarantee and improve quality of life for all; calls on the Commission and the Member States to maximise efforts as regards investing in affordable housing to cover the housing needs of the low- and middle-income groups (the three bottom quintiles), ensuring that at least 30 % of all newly built houses constitute affordable housing for both of these income groups, and to eliminate energy poverty by 2030 through supporting energy efficiency investment by low-income households; calls on the Member States to prioritise renovation in their recovery and resilience plans; urges the Commission to come up with an ambitious action plan to progressively eradicate homelessness by 2030, including a European-wide 'Housing First' approach; calls on the Commission to propose an EU framework for national homelessness strategies; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure minimum standards for quality housing for cross-border and seasonal workers, which should be decoupled from their remuneration, as well as ensuring decent facilities, tenant privacy and written tenancy contracts enforced by labour inspectorates and establishing standards in this regard;
48. Insists that all workers are included in the social security system and entitled to unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, maternity, paternity and parental leave, accident insurance and protection against unfair dismissal;
49. Is concerned about the imbalances in healthcare quality and access across the EU that

the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare; recalls that poorer people tend to live on average 6 years less than wealthier people and that persons with disabilities often face difficulties in accessing healthcare; highlights the need to address the social, economic and environmental determinants of health in order to tackle these health inequalities; calls on the Commission to develop common indicators and methodologies to monitor health, as well as the performance and accessibility of healthcare systems, with a view to reducing inequalities, identifying and prioritising areas in need of improvement and obtaining increased funding; calls on the Commission to analyse how the different national social welfare systems are covering social welfare needs during the current crisis, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses regarding access to and provision of services and social protection, and to ensure a mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of social welfare systems in Europe, in order to verify their degree of resilience when they undergo shocks of different degrees of severity and study in what way they can be made more resilient and robust to resist future crises;

50. Highlights that universal access to public, solidarity-based and adequate retirement and old age pensions must be granted to all; acknowledges the challenges faced by Member States in strengthening the sustainability of pension systems, but stresses the importance of safeguarding solidarity in pension systems by strengthening the revenue side; underlines the importance of public and occupational pension systems which provide an adequate retirement income above the poverty threshold and allow pensioners to maintain their standard of living; believes that the best way to ensure sustainable, safe and adequate pensions for women and men is to increase the overall employment rate and provide more quality jobs across all ages, improve working and employment conditions, and commit the necessary public spending; believes that pension system reforms should focus among other aspects on the effective retirement age and reflect labour market trends, birth rates, the health and wealth situation, working conditions and the economic dependency ratio; considers that these reforms must also take account of the situation of millions of workers in Europe, particularly women, young people and the self-employed, who are being adversely affected by insecure, precarious employment, periods of involuntary unemployment and reduced working time; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take into account the particular situation of elderly workers on the labour market, and to intensify their efforts towards active and healthy ageing by counteracting discrimination against the elderly in employment and developing job market inclusion programmes for citizens aged over 55, with lifelong learning as a key priority;
51. Is concerned at the way the COVID-19 pandemic has further deepened the vulnerability, isolation, and risk of poverty and social exclusion of the elderly population; stresses that the pandemic has proven the need for a EU model which promotes and safeguards the dignity and fundamental rights of the elderly; calls on the Commission to present a plan to ensure the mental health, dignity and wellbeing of people, including the elderly, by supporting adequate quality healthcare and care services, investing in community-based services, health prevention and promotion, social protection, and decent and affordable housing and infrastructure, as well as supporting social economy projects including co-housing and cooperative housing, health and wellness programmes, adult day care and long-term care, and protecting the role and working conditions of caregivers, also fostering intergenerational solidarity; calls on the Member States to provide equal access to affordable, preventive and curative healthcare of good quality as enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, including medical and care services and facilities which do not discriminate on grounds

of age;

52. Welcomes the recent Commission report on the impact of demographic change on different groups in society and on areas and regions disproportionately affected in Europe; calls on the Commission and the Member States to commit more of the resources available under the ERDF to improving transport and telecommunications infrastructure in areas with a high ageing population, as well as primarily rural areas and areas suffering from depopulation;

4. Fair mobility

53. Calls on the Commission to revise the Temporary Work Agency (TWA) Directive in order to establish a legal framework to ensure decent working conditions and equal treatment for intra-EU seasonal workers and mobile workers on fixed-term contracts with temporary work agencies or any other type of labour market intermediary, including recruiting agencies; calls on Member States to strengthen enforcement and combat the practices of malicious temporary work agencies; stresses that this legal framework could include: a ban on labour market intermediaries who do not comply with the TWA Directive operating in the single market, a guaranteed minimum wage by collective agreement or by law, a guaranteed minimum number of hours per week/month that the employer cannot deduct under any heading from the minimum wage or wages laid down by collective agreement, no deductions from wages in the case of part-time contracts, guaranteed equal treatment for any person who, in the Member State concerned, is protected as a worker working in the same company/sector, a requirement that all temporary work agencies operating in the internal market are listed on a European register and are certified to operate in the single market, sanctions on companies using fraudulent recruitment practices and trafficking people for labour exploitation, and access to information on employment contracts and labour rights in a language that the worker can understand; calls on the Commission and Member States to end direct payments under the common agricultural policy to beneficiaries who do not comply with national and European labour law, ILO conventions and applicable collective bargaining agreements;
54. Highlights that freedom of movement of workers in the EU is a fundamental freedom and an integral part of the internal market's success; stresses that the free movement of services must be achieved without undermining workers' rights and social rights; considers that the free movement of services goes hand in hand with the free and fair mobility of workers providing those services, and that the internal market benefits when the rules on working conditions are upheld and the health and safety of mobile workers is protected; notes that there are grey areas and legal loopholes with some workers exercising this freedom in precarious conditions and often through fraudulent recruitment agencies and labour market intermediaries; calls on the Commission and Member States to guarantee decent working conditions and equal treatment for all mobile workers in the EU;
55. Calls for an EU approach to end labour cost competition and increase upward social convergence for all; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure fair and decent working conditions for mobile, cross-border, and seasonal workers in the EU and that they enjoy equal access to employment and opportunities in other Member States and equal levels of social protection as provided in Article 45.2 TFEU; calls for practices relating to posted workers also to be taken into account; urges the Member

States to ensure adequate social security coordination, including through the revision of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems¹ and strengthening the portability of rights; calls for further promotion of the digitalisation of social security systems; calls on the Member States and the Commission to ensure the protection of all affected workers in cases of transfers of undertakings, and to assess the need for a revision of the Directive on Transfer of Undertakings;

56. Underlines that the practices of establishing subsidiaries or creating subcontracting chains with the aim of reducing social security, avoiding employers' obligations and contributions without creating effective social insurance coverage in practice, are detrimental to both the protection of workers and the sustainability of welfare systems and have to be addressed by the Commission and the Member States; calls on the Commission and the Member States, with a view to fairness in the internal market, to take legislative measures to end abusive subcontracting, as well as to ensure general joint and several liability throughout the whole subcontracting chain in order to protect workers' rights and their claims over issues such as wage arrears, non-payment of social contributions, bankruptcy, disappearances and 'letterbox subcontractors' who do not pay as agreed;
57. Calls on the Commission to strongly enforce the social clause of the existing EU public procurement directive and to examine the need to revise that directive in order to strengthen social clauses in public contracts, requiring economic operators and subcontractors to fully respect workers' right to collective bargaining, and to set conditions for the full implementation of the applicable sectorial collective agreements and the working conditions described therein, while at the same time respecting national labour market traditions and models; calls for this revision to exempt all social and welfare services from the procurement obligations and establish a European exclusion mechanism to exclude primary contractors and subcontractors who repeatedly engage in unfair competition and tax fraud; calls on the Member States to ensure compliance, monitoring and enforcement;
58. Is concerned about the large amounts of tax revenue foregone due to large-scale tax avoidance; calls on the Council to speed up the negotiations on legislation regarding public country-by-country reporting and a common consolidated corporate tax base, and to revise the criteria for both the Code of Conduct Group for business taxation and the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions;
59. Welcomes the establishment of the European Labour Authority (ELA); calls for the ELA to be fully operational as soon as possible; calls on it to undertake the continuous exchange of information on best practices with the respective labour authorities of the Member States and enforcement of tentative inspections; stresses that in order for the ELA to be effective in combating illegal practices and the exploitation and abuse of workers, it should be facilitated to carry out controls and impose penalties on non-compliant companies; underlines that this also necessitates a broadened mandate of the Authority, covering EU legislative acts such as, for example, Directives 2008/104/EC²,

¹ OJ L 166, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

² Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work (OJ L 327, 5.12.2008, p. 9).

2014/36/EU¹ and 2009/52/EC² of the European Parliament and of the Council, as well as the relevant legislation on occupational safety and health; believes the ELA and national inspectorates should be required to conduct a joint or concerted inspection when cases of abuse are brought to its attention by a national social partner; urges the Commission, therefore, to include these aspects in the evaluation of the ELA's mandate foreseen for 2024 and to involve stakeholders with profound knowledge of different labour market models in the work and evaluations of the ELA; considers furthermore that the management of the ELA should follow the same tripartite structure as other agencies and thus allow for increased representation, including voting rights, of social partners in the Management Board;

60. Invites the Commission to put forward, following a proper impact assessment, a proposal for a digital EU social security number, as it announced in 2018, in order to foster and protect workers' mobility, also having the potential of establishing a control mechanism for both individuals and relevant authorities to ensure that workers are covered and social security is paid in accordance with obligations, such as a personal labour card, and that EU rules on labour mobility and social security coordination are enforced in a fair and effective way; believes moreover that workers and their representatives and inspectorates must have up-to-date access to information about their employers and their wage entitlements and labour and social rights, in accordance with the sectorial collective agreement or national legislation where applicable and in line with data protection criteria;
61. Invites the Commission to study the possibilities of enabling third-country national workers to obtain work permits in the EU, under the precondition that all safeguards in national and EU labour law are effectively ensuring protection and decent working conditions for third-country nationals too and that this will not result in labour market distortions; asks the Commission to conduct an extensive investigation into the trends characterising posted third-country nationals with regard to their working conditions, and emphasises the need for possible policy measures at EU or national level based on the outcome of the investigation; is deeply concerned at the current increase in the share of third-country nationals in sectors with a reputation for precarious working conditions and cases of abuse; underlines that third-country nationals are often more vulnerable for exploitation and therefore need protection; highlights that this includes abusive practices such as bogus posting, bogus self-employment, fraudulent subcontracting and recruiting agencies, letter-box companies and undeclared work; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure compliance with applicable laws and rules on employment conditions when dealing with third-country nationals, in order to eliminate abuses, and calls on the Member States to implement the protective elements of Directive 2009/52/EC, ensuring accessible and effective complaint mechanisms making it possible to effectively claim back due wages and social security contributions;

¹ Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 375).

² Directive 2009/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 providing for minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals (OJ L 168, 30.6.2009, p. 24).

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