

How MEPS want to tackle in-work poverty in the EU



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To fight in-work poverty, MEPs want action on minimum wages and support for those most at risk including women and gig economy workers.

Nearly 10% of EU workers are living in poverty, with 21.7% of the population affected by poverty or social exclusion. On top of this, the pandemic risks exacerbating inequalities in the EU.

In light of this, MEPs are urging the European Commission and EU countries to include the prevention of in-work poverty in their overall goal to end poverty in the EU because the principle according to which “work is the best remedy for poverty” does not apply to low-wage sectors and those working under precarious and atypical working conditions.

In a report adopted 9 February, MEPs called for minimum wages to be set above the poverty threshold.

More on [EU measures to improve workers' rights](#).

" We need urgent action. We needed action yesterday across Europe. We need minimum standards. We need strong social security systems. We need wages and income that allow for decent living "

Özlem Demirel (The Left)

Report author

European directive on minimum wages

MEPs welcomed the [Commission's proposal](#) for EU rules on adequate minimum wages, describing it as an important step to ensure that everyone can earn a living from their work and participate in society.

They said the law should ensure employers do not deduct the costs for carrying out work, such as accommodation or equipment, from [minimum wages](#).

21

EU countries have statutory minimum wages

6

EU countries have minimum wages protected by collective agreements: Denmark, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Finland and Sweden

Equal labour conditions for digital platform workers

MEPs said that in order to fight in-work poverty the [legislative framework on minimum working conditions](#) should apply to all workers, including [atypical or non-standard workers in the digital economy](#), who often work in precarious conditions.

They should also be covered by labour laws and social security provisions and should be able to engage in collective bargaining.

Women more at risk of poverty and social exclusion

[Women in the EU earn on average 15% less than men](#), due in part to lower participation in the labour market. MEPs urged EU countries to implement the [Work-Life Balance Directive](#) to help address the issue.

Since women are more at risk of poverty and social exclusion than men, MEPs also urged action to [tackle the gender pay gap](#) and guarantee access to affordable and quality childcare.

Find out more

[Resolution on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU](#)

[Press release: minimum wage is a remedy for inequality and in-work poverty](#)

[Video: highlights of the debate](#)

[Statement by lead MEPs on the proposal for a directive on adequate minimum wages](#)

[Q&A: adequate minimum wages](#)

[European Pillar of Social Rights](#)