Visual Porto 2023 Statement

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Publication | 25.05.2023

For an ambitious European social agenda

Green Ministers and Co-Presidents statement ahead of the “Porto Social Forum”

Green Ministers and Co-Presidents statement ahead of the “Porto Social Forum” of 26-27 May 2023

This week’s Porto Social Forum 2023 is a new opportunity to insist that we desperately need urgent action on social issues. The existence of **poverty and precarity in one of the richest regions** of the globe is **unacceptable** and the urgent need to **act decisively and in solidarity to ensure a socially just transition** to a sustainable socio-economic model and **greatly improve social resilience** to economic, health and geopolitical crises is beyond question.

The EU institutions and Member States have a fundamental obligation under the treaties to promote the well-being of its peoples, combat social exclusion and discrimination, and promote gender equality, social justice and protection. We welcome that the EU Parliament, Commission and Council reaffirmed this obligation in 2017 through their **proclamation of the principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) which aim to ensure universal access to goods and services and quality jobs necessary to a decent standard of living** and that heads of state or government made its implementation at EU and MS level a strategic priority for 2019-24.

We especially welcome the initiatives taken so far to implement the EPSR such as the first attempt to at least measure social progress as an integral part of the European Semester process from 2018 and the current Commission’s EPSR Action Plan of 2021, focusing on the aspects of training and reducing unemployment and poverty; of ensuring that children at risk of poverty and social exclusion have effective access to key services such as healthcare and education (Child Guarantee); and of contributing to better reconciliation between professional and private life and supporting stronger female labour market participation.

The first **Porto Summit in May 2021** and the resulting Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government and the Commitment adopted by the EP, Commission and Social Partners was an **important exercise in creating a momentum** for coordinated progress at EU and Member State level on **implementing upward social convergence.**

In light of the current energy crisis and the rising energy poverty across the EU, we underscore the **need for the 2023 Porto Social Forum to reiterate the commitments to the targets established and raise the ambition further and pave the way for stronger commitments to concrete measures at EU and national level.**

We underline the following areas as **priorities for action**:

- We urge the commission and Member States to **vastly raise their ambition** and agree to **binding targets for the implementation of all of the 20 principles of the EPSR.**
- We insist that the **Union needs a "Social Deal" of the same importance as and fully integrated with the "Green Deal"** to ensure all instruments at EU and national level are mobilised towards **realising a socially just and ecologically sustainable and resilient Union within the current decade.**
- We welcome initiatives such as the **"Social Convergence Framework"** that have been proposed by some Member States aimed at promoting the pursuit of social priorities on an equal footing with economic and fiscal targets in a **revised EU Economic & Social Governance** framework.
- We call for a more ambitious Commission's action plan. The current, while setting out a few but useful sub-targets for boosting access to training and employment to help labour markets, does not address the quality of jobs and adequacy of wages and needs to better tackle social protection to help individuals.
- We welcome the adoption of the Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed, (8.11.2019) and encourage the Commission's follow-up to ensure that the National Action Plans effectively implement it.
- We call for **a rapid and ambitious transposition of recently agreed social and employment legislation** such as the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages to increase statutory minimum wages and the Directive on Pay Transparency in the EU.
- We fully support the demand of the European Parliament for a **directive on minimum income,** as an essential tool to combat poverty and precarity.
- We insist that it is essential in general, and specifically for the potentially millions of new "green" jobs, to ensure **equal pay for work of equal value** and to promote collective bargaining - including through a revision of European Works Councils directive - and to implement effective regulation of algorithmic management at work.
- We point to the success of the instrument to **Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)** in bolstering national job protection schemes and encourage this instrument to be made a **permanent solidarity instrument** to boost resilience.
- Access to **decent, affordable, well-insulated housing where people can live in dignity must be treated as a right**, not a privilege. Public sector action is essential, through, for example, binding targets for public investment in affordable housing and rent controls where necessary. Ambitious steps need to be taken to **end homelessness by 2030** at the latest (including a permanent financial framework of women shelters and shelters for trans- and non-binary persons).
- We need to greatly improve reconciliation between professional and private life for men as well as for women, access to childcare and care for dependants and action must be taken in the **care sector** where workers pay and working conditions desperately need improving in many Member States.
- Women continue to shoulder the brunt of the multiple crises. **Gender equality policies** - the second pillar of the EPSR - **are urgently required.**
- We need to **eradicate discrimination**, especially to tackle racism, marginalisation of people living with disabilities, LGBTQIA+-phobia, and gender-based violence as well to tackle all forms of ageism. We must revive the EU's long-blocked anti-discrimination Directive, and new measures need to be taken to end gender-based violence by adopting an inclusive and ambitious EU Directive to combat it and by categorising it as an EU crime.
- We believe that up-skilling, re-skilling and lifelong learning are crucial elements to make sure the transition is fair and inclusive. But the green transition should be first of all an opportunity for

working people to access more and better jobs with stable employment, fair pay, and decent working conditions, with workers and trade unions being involved at every stage of the process.
- We believe that a **revision of public procurement** directives is essential to make **social/environmental conditionalities for public tenders mandatory** and thus **ensure public money gets a public return.**
- More generally, we call on the Commission to come up with a **Social Resilience package** as a set of measures and means to strengthen social welfare and social protection systems in the EU.

SIGNATORIES:

- **Henri Kox**, Minister for Housing and Minister for Internal Security, Luxembourg.
- **Roderic O'Gorman**, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Ireland.
- **Lisa Paus,** Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany.
- **Johannes Rauch,** Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria.
- **Marie-Colline Leroy**, State Secretary for Gender Equality, Equal Opportunities and Diversity of the Federal Government, Belgium.
- **Philippe Lambert**, Greens/EFA co-president.
- **Terry Reintke,** Greens/EFA co-president.

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Responsible MEPs



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Press & Media Advisor FR-IT-ES (for French, Italian and Spanish press)

Attached documents

Green ministerial letter Porto Social Forum 2023

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