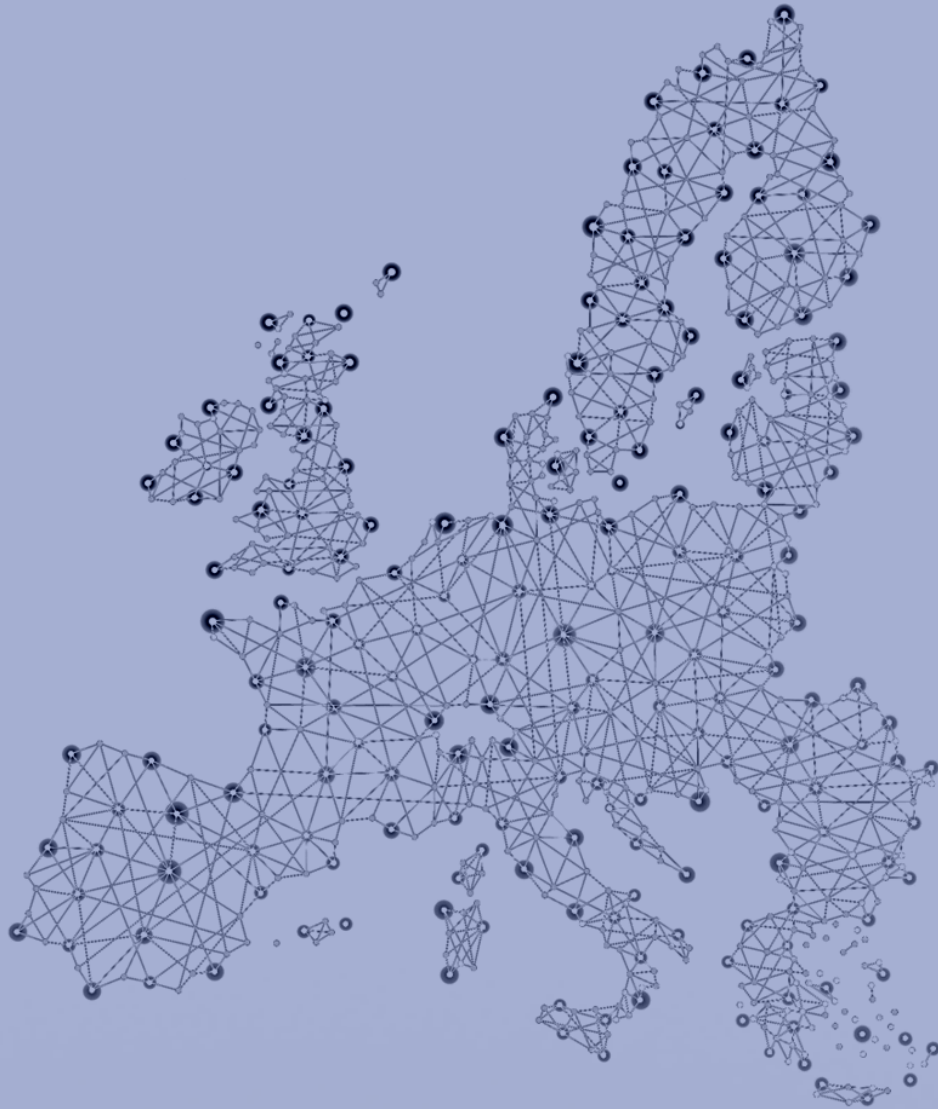


TOWARDS A SOCIAL EUROPE

WITH NEW RIGHTS



new rights

9 May, 2024
Zurbano Palace

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

on the occasion
of Europe day

During the 2019-2024 term of the European Parliament, the European Union has had to address successive complex situations such as the pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the war in Gaza, and the inflation crisis.

In contrast with the unfair austerity policies introduced in the wake of the international financial crisis and the "Great Recession", the

European Union and its Member States have responded rapidly, and in a coordinated and compassionate manner, to the impacts of the crises of the past few years. The SURE instrument and the Next Generation EU Funds are examples of innovative EU initiatives that have contributed decisively, first, to maintaining economic activity and

to protecting jobs and families and, secondly, to accelerating post-pandemic economic and social recovery.

The current term of the European Parliament is also drawing to a close with notable results as regards labour, employment and social protection policies. Even though greater ambition would have been desirable, the EU co-legislators have adopted new, emblematic, and long-awaited Directives on such matters as gender balance in boards of

directors, pay transparency to close the gender pay



gap, adequate minimum wages, protecting workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos and lead at work and, finally, and after much debate, corporate sustainability due diligence and working conditions of digital platform workers. In the latter case, the Directive provides for a legal presumption of employment, as well as new rights for workers and their representatives in relation to the use of algorithms at work.

In addition, relevant Council Recommendations have also been adopted on developing framework conditions for the social economy (a democratic and inclusive economic model that generates social impacts in response to current challenges), on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union and on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality.

This term of the European Parliament must be neither a parenthesis nor a full stop to the progress towards a social Europe. The establishment of a new European Parliament following the elections to be held in June 2024, the appointment of a new Commission, and the approval by the European Council of an EU Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029 represent opportunities to continue improving living and working conditions and reducing inequalities, and to embark upon a new period of social progress in the European project.


The event to be held in Madrid on 9 May, Europe Day, aims to provide a framework for meetings and dialogue between like-minded actors to reflect on and define proposals for the European social agenda of the immediate future, a renewed agenda that must be transformative and ambitious if it is to achieve the poverty reduction, employment and training goals that the European Union has set for 2030.

The innovative discussions held during the recent Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union on democracy at work, green collective bargaining, and mental health and precarious employment all produced useful input for these proposals.


Similarly, the inter-institutional La Hulpe Declaration on the future of the European Pillar of Social Rights signed in April by the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the Commission, European social partners and civil society representatives must guide the way for the European Union in the coming years.

The European Pillar of Social Rights must continue to serve as our compass during this new stage, delivering on rights that have yet to be developed or have only been partially developed. Such is the case of the right to lifelong learning, an essential right aimed at helping all people to develop in their professional careers and to improve their job opportunities.


Moving ahead with fair digital and green transitions must also be a priority for us. Now is the time to champion a use of artificial intelligence and algorithms that is subject to human control, and a digitalization that is at the service of workers, respecting their individual and collective rights. In addition, green collective bargaining must play an essential role in meeting the objectives of the European Green Deal and in achieving climate neutrality.



Similarly, more democracy at work -in the form of rights to information, consultation, participation and collective bargaining to ensure greater worker participation in corporate decision-making- can contribute to the sustainable growth of the European Union and, in particular, to a competitive and inclusive social market economy, and, ultimately, to full employment, decent work and social progress.



Debates on flexible working times, the reduction of the working day or the protection of employment in the case of mass and individual redundancies remain pending.



Finally, it is fundamental for this new stage to maintain and strengthen the current momentum in favour of the social economy and place it at the highest level of the agenda of the European institutions.

In all cases, European social dialogue, as indicated in the recent Val Duchesse Tripartite Declaration, is a fundamental component of the European social model and of our European democracy. This is why, the European social dialogue, between EU institutions and European social partners, and the bipartite dialogue of these institutions and partners among themselves, must contribute to the definition and implementation of the new social agenda.

1 WELCOME TO PARTICIPANTS

10.35 H

2 PANEL DISCUSSION 1

SOCIAL EUROPE IN THE EU'S 2019-2024 CYCLE

PARTICIPANTS:

AGNES JONGERIUS (MEP)
PETROS KOKKALIS (MEP)
LAURA DE BONFILS (SOCIAL PLATFORM)
MILENA ANGELOVA (SGI EUROPE)
JOAQUÍN PÉREZ REY (SECRETARY OF STATE OF LABOUR, SPAIN)

MODERATED BY IRENE LEBRUSÁN,
(PHD IN SOCIOLOGY, RESEARCH FELLOW AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY AND ANALYST)

10.45 - 12.00 H

3 PANEL DISCUSSION 2

A NEW SOCIAL AGENDA FOR EUROPE

PARTICIPANTS:

YOLANDA DÍAZ
(SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL ECONOMY, SPAIN)
LUKA MESEC
(DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF LABOUR, FAMILY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, SLOVENIA)
SIMONA BUCURĂ-OPRESCU
(MINISTER OF LABOR AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY, ROMANIA)
KATARZYNA NOWAKOWSKA
(DEPUTY MINISTER OF FAMILY, LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY, POLAND)
OLIVER RÖPKE
(EESC'S PRESIDENT)
LEÏLA CHAIBI
(MEP)

MODERATED BY JAVIER RUIZ,
JOURNALIST AND ECONOMIST.

12.05 - 13.20 H

4 GROUP PHOTO

13.25 H



MINISTRY
OF LABOUR
AND SOCIAL ECONOMY