

# The European Pillar of Social Rights

## POLICY PRÉCIS

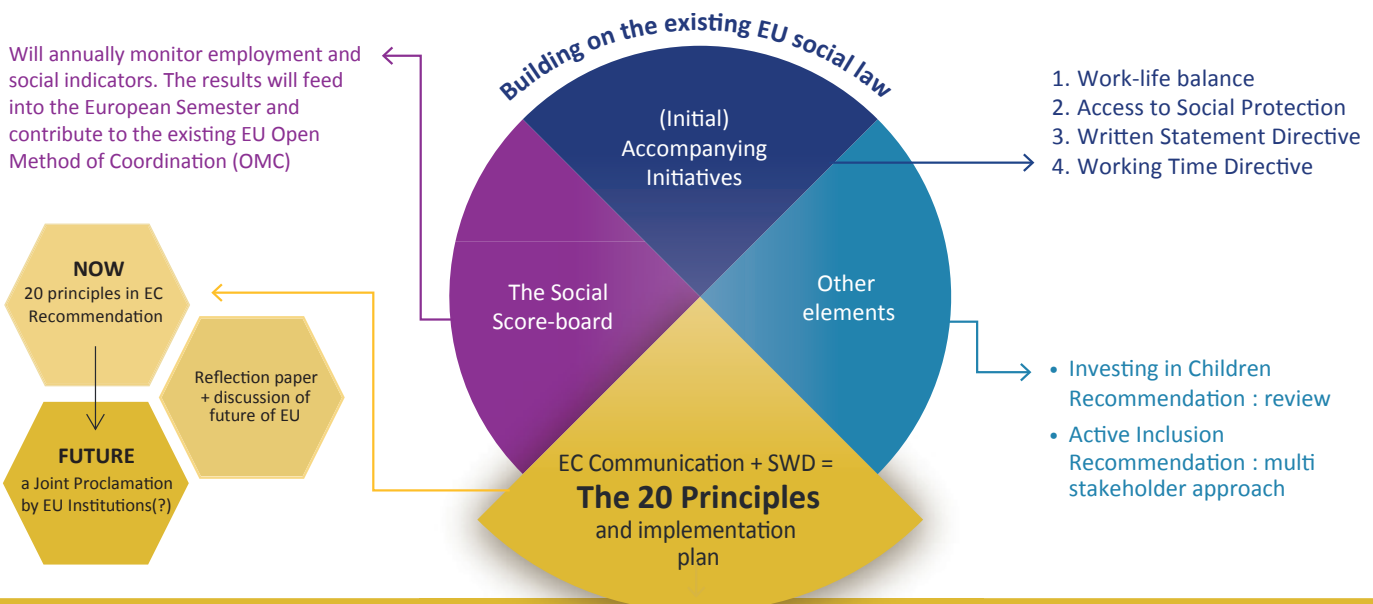


***A fairer and more social Europe is also simply what citizens expect ... the Pillar will help us avoid a race to the bottom and encourage a race to the top.***

*- Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility*

Building a more inclusive and fairer Union is a key priority for the European Commission (EC). In March 2016, the EC presented a preliminary outline of the European Pillar of Social Rights and launched a broad public consultation. One year later, the EC published its final proposal for the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar sets out a number of key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems and more resilient economic structures. The Pillar is designed as a compass for a renewed process of convergence towards better working and living conditions. It is primarily conceived for the euro area but open to all EU Member States.

## What is the European Pillar of Social Rights?



### COVERS THREE AREAS:

#### Equal opportunities and access to the labour market

- 1 Education, training and life-long learning
- 2 Gender equality
- 3 Equal opportunity
- 4 Active support to employment
- 5 Secure and adaptable employment

#### Fair working conditions

- 6 Wages
- 7 Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals
- 8 Social dialogue and involvement of social partners
- 9 Work life balance
- 10 Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment

#### Social protection and inclusion

- 11 Childcare and support to children
- 12 Social Protection
- 13 Unemployment benefits
- 14 Minimum income
- 15 Old age income and pensions
- 16 Health care
- 17 Inclusion of people with disabilities
- 18 Long-term care
- 19 Housing and assistance for the homeless
- 20 Access to essential services

#### Glossary:

- EC Communication: has no legal effect, it is used when the EC wishes to set out its own thinking on a topical issue.
- EC Recommendation: a legal instrument that encourages to act in a particular way without being binding.
- European Semester: is a yearly cycle of economic policy coordination, the EC analyses MS's budgetary reforms and delivers country-specific recommendations.
- Open Method of Coordination (OMC): 'soft' law; a form of intergovernmental policy-making that does not result in binding legislative measures.
- Proposal for Joint Proclamation: EC will enter into discussions with the EP and the Council to work towards broad political support and high-level endorsement of the Pillar. The use of a joint proclamation is modelled upon the precedent of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- SWD (Staff Working Document): summarises research, analysis, findings and recommendations of an evaluation or communication, providing input to the next round of decision making.



**How long you live and how healthily you live depend on social determinants. This leads to inequalities in people's quality of life. This is unfair.**

- Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Employment and social protection policies are highly relevant for addressing the social determinants of health equity. If properly implemented, each of the 20 principles in the European Pillar of Social Rights can have an important role in reducing health inequalities. For example:

<p><b>Health care</b></p>	<p><i>'Everyone has the right to timely access to affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality.'</i></p> <p>Policies and practices that improve access to health care can help people break the cycle of disadvantage. Concrete measures to address health inequalities and mental health are needed, together with more investment in health promotion and diseases prevention.</p>
<p><b>Education, training and life-long learning</b></p>	<p><i>'Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.'</i></p> <p>Investing in education across the social gradient and increasing availability of learning across the life-course, including skills for employability, resilience, physical and mental health, is important for addressing health inequalities. By applying universal and targeted measures for the most vulnerable, including migrants, we need to ensure that no one is left behind.</p>
<p><b>Access to Social Protection</b></p>	<p><i>'Regardless of the type and duration of their employment relationship, workers, and, under comparable conditions, the self-employed, have the right to adequate social protection.'</i></p> <p>Increasing the coverage and range of social protection packages can improve health and reduce health inequalities. It should provide access to health care, including health promotion and disease prevention programmes to avoid the need for more costly future health services.</p>
<p><b>Work life balance</b></p>	<p><i>'Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way.'</i></p> <p>Addressing health inequalities and breaking the cycle of disadvantage requires support for parents and carers to combine work with other responsibilities. Provisions to make flexible and part-time work more fair and available for both men and women can be key to a more inclusive labour market for improved social and health equity.</p>
<p><b>Childcare and support for children</b></p>	<p><i>'Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality. Children have the right to protection from poverty. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the right to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities.'</i></p> <p>An effective way to address health and social inequalities is to ensure that early years education and care are both universal and provided at levels tailored to social need, with a focus on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including migrants.</p>

## Join us in the consultation process

In 2017, the EC is already consulting about the four (initial) accompanying initiatives (Work-Life Balance, Access to Social Protection, the Written Statement Directive, and the Working Time Directive). EuroHealthNet will respond to consultations and engage members and partners. Find more information about the accompanying initiatives here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1310&langId=en>.

**EuroHealthNet has made another Policy Précis on the European Pillar of Social Rights and health inequalities, find it here: [www.eurohealthnet.eu](http://www.eurohealthnet.eu)**



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