

10 PRIORITIES FOR A PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN THE MEMBER STATES

RESOLUTION OF CESI'S COMMISSION ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI) is a confederation of more than 40 national and European trade union organisations from over 20 European countries, with a total of more than 5 million individual members. Founded in 1990, CESI advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU. Most of CESI's affiliates are employed in the fields of central, regional and local administration, education, training and research, security and justice, healthcare, postal services and telecommunications, defence and transport. CESI represents public and private sector workers.

On the occasion of the Porto Social Summit on May 7/8 2021, where heads of state and government will convene to discuss the European Commission's Action Plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights with the leaders of the EU's institutions, CESI's Commission on Employment and Social Affairs spells out 10 governance priorities for the implementation of the Pillar and its Action Plan in the Member States.

I. Policy making: To successfully encourage Member States to implement the Pillar nationally, there is a need for ...

1. **... Strengthened administrations and public services to provide services of general interest:** The European Commission should follow an agenda for strong public services. This should highlight, more than before, the urgent need for more investments in administrations and public services and their personnel, in order to make them resilient and allow them to function and deliver essential services for the achievement of the Pillar also during unexpected and severe crises, as currently during the Covid pandemic. The European Semester and a European economic governance system should further encourage rather than discourage investments in the public sector – Even if this may mean additional debts it yields huge returns in the long run.
2. **... focus on re-communalisation:** The Covid crisis has again unearthed negative impacts of uncompromising market liberalisation and privatisations in many areas of the public sector. This concerns both the quality of service delivery and the quality of employment and working conditions. Rather than continue to pursue a unilateral dogmatic agenda of further market openings in services of general economic interest, the European Commission should encourage Member States to consider more re-communalisations, stressing the role of public services to guarantee the well-being of people and to make societies resilient to crises.
3. **... Decent work & social conditionality criteria in EU funding:** Where Member States, public authorities or private actors seek to benefit from EU financial resources, there should be clear conditionality criteria in place aimed at demonstrating that an envisaged project or measure furthers the realisation of the objectives of the Pillar.

4. **... Social and decent work criteria in public procurement:** The obligation for Member States under EU public procurement rules to ensure that in the performance of public contracts economic operators comply with applicable obligations in the fields of environmental, social and labour law established by Union law, national law, collective agreements or by international environmental, social and labour law should be stricter interpreted and violations pursued more strictly by the European Commission, including via infringement procedures.
5. **... Socially compatible State aid:** The European Commission should envisage to initiate a review of State aid rules to include strict social criteria to the EU state aid regime. Such a revision would ensure that government aid to industry and service actors furthers the realisation of the objectives of the Pillar.
6. **... Funding for measures of interest:** Where the EU has identified a specific goal which it would like the Member States to follow, it should (co-)fund measures to reach this objective to further incentivise Member States. Experience has shown that EU recommendations are most likely to meet the goodwill of Member States if they come along with money.

II. Monitoring: To keep track of how Member States are fulfilling the Pillar's principles, there is a need for ...

7. **... Naming and shaming:** The EU's Social Scoreboard should remain the central tool to monitor the social architecture in the Member States. The appropriateness and soundness of the indicators and benchmarks used in the Scoreboard should be regularly assessed with the full formal involvement of all European horizontal and sectoral social partner organisations. The annual findings of the Scoreboard should always be published by the European Commission.
8. **... A monitoring mechanism to trace social progress to the Pillar:** It would be intriguing to make the Scoreboard sensitive to detecting which new measures and policies actually have its root and ambition in the Pillar and where concrete advantages or benefits were achieved for workers.

III. Raising awareness: To make the Pillar more known across Europe, there is a need for ...

9. **... Access to consultations and the European Semester, also for independent unions:** The European Commission must involve all European trade union umbrella organisations and all horizontal and sectoral social partners actively in all debates and consultations on the Pillar and enable them and their members to seize it. Access to conferences, hearings, formal consultations, applicable policy reviews, etc. should be open also to CESI as an independent trade union organisation. This also concerns access to the European Semester process, which is supposed to be(come) a major vehicle to help implement the Pillar in the Member States.
10. **... Funding for awareness and capacity – also for independent unions:** The European Commission should not overly rely on organisations including trade unions to advertise the Pillar out of their own ambition and at their own expense, but set up a dedicated EU funding pot which provides – proportionally for all European trade union umbrella organisations, in particular also CESI as an independent trade union organisation – financial resources to help and enable them to build capacity on the Pillar and apply its principles in their trade union work and in social dialogue. The need for more financial support also concerns capacity building on the European Semester process.