



Jean-Claude Juncker
President
European Commission

Brussels, 11 September 2017

Dear President Juncker, dear Jean-Claude,

You will deliver your State of the Union address this week at a critical time for the European Union. It comes at a time of growing disconnect between citizens and their Union. Furthermore, we have to face the reality of the rise in populism, which should not be underestimated. All this is happening just two years before the next European elections. It is crucial that we bring Europe back on track.

I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on the discussion we have had in person, as I truly believe that times are critical. For us, the Party of European Socialists, there is an urgent need for a more social Europe, for a Europe of decent working conditions, for a Europe of strong social protection and for a Europe against inequalities. The Commission's paper on the European Pillar of Social Rights is another welcome step in the right direction. Your promise of a "Social Triple A" was an important and welcome commitment. It is high time to deliver on the expectations you raised.

Our priorities are clear:

- The EU must become the guarantee of decent wages and quality working conditions for everyone. We call for the adoption of national wage floors, to be reached either by law or through collective bargaining. For work to remain a way out of poverty, these wage floors should be at least above the poverty rate.
- The EU must become the guarantee that every woman and man will receive adequate social protection, including in new forms of labour. We want a framework directive on decent conditions in all forms of employment.
- The EU must guarantee strong social dialogue and workers' rights. It must support collective bargaining in new forms of work, with the creation of platforms for collective bargaining in the digital sector and the extension of collective agreements to individuals engaged in new forms of work.
- The EU must guarantee that no one will suffer discrimination because of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or age. We want a concrete objective to reduce the gender pay gap by



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2% each year, and the means to further combat discrimination in accessing employment, including dissuasive sanctions against discriminatory practices.

- The EU must guarantee fair work and fair competition between workers, concluding the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive and ensuring access to social security for all workers.
- The EU must end poverty and social exclusion. All member states must ensure universal access to essential quality health services, decent housing and basic income security. This implies equal access to minimum income schemes and ending existing age restrictions.
- The EU must guarantee every child's access to healthcare, education, childcare, housing and nutrition. We want a well-funded European Child Guarantee that lifts children out of poverty.
- The EU must guarantee that every young person has access to the European Youth Guarantee as a permanent feature of European employment policies. This implies to seriously increase the funding available to € 5 billion per year from both European and national budgets.
- The European Union shift away from austerity, toward progressive, growth-friendly economic policies. This implies making full use of flexibility within the Stability and Growth Pact, completing the Banking Union and the EMU. It implies much closer attention to the impact of fiscal policy on social policy, and that this be properly reflected in national reform programmes and Country Specific Recommendations. Social protection systems are not an economic burden, but assets for making the economy more resilient.
- The European Union must guarantee a (re-)industrialisation strategy to support workers and industrial communities, and make Europe's industries fit for the challenges of the decades to come, including climate and demographic change, resource scarcity, digitalisation and increasing global competition.
- The European Union must guarantee respect for the Rule of Law in all member states. We welcome the efforts of your Commission to safeguard it wherever it is under threat.
- The European Union must guarantee that there will be no two-speed Europe. All European citizens are and must remain equal. Cohesion has to remain at the heart of our common project if we want it to survive and thrive.

Mr President, allow me to insist on concrete measures to deliver these priorities, making them a tangible reality for every European. It is urgent to proclaim the Social Pillar, as is the need for a Social Action Plan to give Europe the means to deliver on its word. This must be at the core of the sixth scenario for the Future of the EU.

I look forward to your State of the Union address as a strong step in that direction.

Sincerely yours,



Sergei Stanishev

PES President