

**EN**

**SOC/829**

**EU Anti-poverty Strategy**

Brussels, 17 July 2025

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**
European Economic and Social Committee

**EU Anti-poverty Strategy**
(exploratory opinion requested by the European Commission)

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598th plenary session

Brussels
16-17 July 2025

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Meeting of 17 July 2025
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Agenda item 17

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**The president** moved that the Committee turn to agenda item 16 - adoption of an opinion on the

*EU Anti-poverty Strategy*

Exploratory opinion requested by the European Commission.

The preliminary work had been carried out by the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (president: Cinzia Del Rio). The rapporteur was **Krzysztof Balon** and the co-rapporteur **Sophia Reisecker**.

The **rapporteur** highlighted the importance of adopting a first-ever EU Poverty Strategy and stressed how poverty was a human rights violation and a systemic injustice.

The **co-rapporteur** reminded that the strategy should be accompanied by measures at national level and underlined the importance of access to essential services, minimum income schemes and quality jobs.

The following members took part into the debate that followed: Pascal Debay, Séamus Boland and Mariya Mincheva. They mentioned the worrying reduction of budget allocated to fighting poverty in the proposed MFF and the importance of the measures of the strategy to be realistic.

The following amendments had been tabled to opinion SOC/829:

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| **Amendment 1** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 2.1****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| The EESC stresses the urgent need to step up initiatives to fight poverty. Statistics and experience of those affected by poverty and social exclusion show that ***EU and national initiatives have*** been insufficient, although some promising measures have been taken. The cost of living crisis worsened the situation across Europe and aggravated the housing and homelessness crises, also driven by rising energy poverty. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by poverty. In-work poverty needs special attention. The effect of the health and care system crises, including challenges due to increasing long-term care (LTC), must be recognised. To better understand the ***urgency***, the EESC provides significant data in an Annex to the opinion. | The EESC stresses the urgent need to step up initiatives to fight poverty. Statistics and experience of those affected by poverty and social exclusion show that ***progress has*** been insufficient, although some promising measures have been taken. The cost of living crisis worsened the situation across Europe and aggravated the housing and homelessness crises, also driven by rising energy poverty. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by poverty. In-work poverty needs special attention. The effect of the health and care system crises, including challenges due to increasing long-term care (LTC), must be recognised. To better understand the ***need for resolute action***, the EESC provides significant data in an Annex to the opinion. |

A compromise was endorsed by the assembly:

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Compromise*** |
| The EESC stresses the urgent need to step up initiatives to fight poverty. Statistics and experience of those affected by poverty and social exclusion show that EU and national ***initiatives have*** been insufficient, although some promising measures have been taken. The cost of living crisis worsened the situation across Europe and aggravated the housing and homelessness crises, also driven by rising energy poverty. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by poverty. In-work poverty needs special attention. The effect of the health and care system crises, including challenges due to increasing long-term care (LTC), must be recognised. To better understand the ***urgency***, the EESC provides significant data in an Annex to the opinion. | The EESC stresses the urgent need to step up initiatives to fight poverty. Statistics and experience of those affected by poverty and social exclusion show that ***progress on*** EU and national ***level has*** been insufficient, although some promising measures have been taken. The cost of living crisis worsened the situation across Europe and aggravated the housing and homelessness crises, also driven by rising energy poverty. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by poverty. In-work poverty needs special attention. The effect of the health and care system crises, including challenges due to increasing long-term care (LTC), must be recognised. To better understand the ***need for resolute action***, the EESC provides significant data in an Annex to the opinion. |

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| **Amendment 2** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.1.1****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| The APS should represent a fundamental political shift, moving beyond moderate poverty reduction. In line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, the goal must be to end poverty. This requires a change in narrative, framing poverty not as an inevitable economic side-effect but as an avoidable violation of ***fundamental rights, resulting from systemic injustice rooted in the unequal distribution of wealth and power***. The APS ***must*** set out a clear path with medium-term, measurable goals to substantially reduce poverty in the EU. A multifaceted set of policies and measures, from EU to local levels, including well-functioning labour market policies, social services, adequate social protection, development of the social economy and fair taxation can ***lead to its eradication***. | The APS should represent a fundamental political shift, moving beyond moderate poverty reduction. In line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, the goal must be to end poverty. This requires a change in narrative, framing poverty not as an inevitable economic side-effect but as an avoidable violation of ***human dignity***. The APS ***should*** set out a clear path with medium-term, measurable goals to substantially reduce poverty in the EU. A multifaceted set of policies and measures, from EU to local levels, including well-functioning labour market policies, social services, adequate social protection, development of the social economy and fair taxation can ***successfully tackle poverty***. |

Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 96 votes to 80 and five abstentions.

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| **Amendment 3** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.2.1****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| ***A*** cornerstone of the APS should be ensuring adequate income and social protection. The EESC reiterates its support for the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income[1] to provide minimum standards to Member States.[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC\_2023\_041\_R\_0001. | ***The EESC stresses that the APS should align poverty reduction goals with productivity-enhancing and employment-generating strategies. Poverty and its root causes should be combatted by a multifaceted set of policies and measures such as labour markets, education and training, social security, social and health services and housing. One*** cornerstone of the APS should be ensuring adequate income and social protection. The EESC reiterates its support for the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income[1] to provide minimum standards to Member States.[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC\_2023\_041\_R\_0001. |

A compromise was endorsed by the Assembly:

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Compromise*** |
| ***A*** cornerstone of the APS should be ensuring adequate income and social protection. The EESC reiterates its support for the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income[1] to provide minimum standards to Member States.[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC\_2023\_041\_R\_0001. | ***3.2.1 [new] The EESC believes that productivity-enhancing and employment-generating strategies are a key factor to tackle poverty. Its root causes should be combatted against by a multifaceted set of policies and measures such as labour markets, education and training, social security, social and health services and housing.******3.2.2 One*** cornerstone of the APS should be ensuring adequate income and social protection. The EESC reiterates its support for the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income[1] to provide minimum standards to Member States.[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC\_2023\_041\_R\_0001. |

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| **Amendment 4** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.3.1****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| The APS ***must*** recognise that employment is not ***an automatic*** guarantee against poverty. In-work poverty is a complex issue, requiring a holistic approach. Quality jobs – ***defined by secure forms of*** employment ***contracts***, fair wages, job security, workers’ rights, work-life balance, ***strong*** collective bargaining and access to social protection – are essential. | The APS ***should*** recognise that employment is not ***always a*** guarantee against poverty. In-work poverty is a complex issue, requiring a holistic approach. Quality jobs – ***featuring aspects such as sustainable*** employment ***provided by well-functioning and productive companies***, ***including*** fair wages, job security, workers’ rights, work-life balance, collective bargaining and access to social protection – are essential. |

Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 98 votes to 72 and four abstentions.

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| **Amendment 5** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.3.2****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| The EESC ***considers that living wages could help to cushion vulnerable workers against future cost-of-living crises. It therefore welcomes*** the agreement on living wages reached by the ILO Governing Body***,*** which recognises their contribution to reducing poverty and inequality[1].[1] https://www.ilo.org/living-wages. | The EESC ***notes*** the agreement on living wages reached ***by the meeting of experts on wages, endorsed*** by the ILO Governing Body which recognises their contribution to reducing poverty and inequality[1].[1] https://www.ilo.org/living-wages. |

A compromise was endorsed by the assembly:

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Compromise*** |
| The EESC ***considers that living wages could help to cushion vulnerable workers against future cost-of-living crises. It therefore welcomes*** the agreement on living wages reached by the ILO Governing Body***,*** which recognises their contribution to reducing poverty and inequality[1].[1] https://www.ilo.org/living-wages. | The EESC ***notes with interest*** the agreement on living wages reached ***by the meeting of experts on wages, endorsed*** by the ILO Governing Body which recognises their contribution to reducing poverty and inequality[1].[1] https://www.ilo.org/living-wages. |

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| **Amendment 6** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.4.3****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| Specific actions should include enforcing the European Child Guarantee targets for ECEC, strengthening public LTC provision, aiming at affordable housing and energy ( ***using tools like enforcing bans on*** energy ***disconnections***), and increasing the ESF+ minimum allocation for food and material deprivation support. | Specific actions should include enforcing the European Child Guarantee targets for ECEC, strengthening public LTC provision, aiming at affordable housing and energy ( ***e.g. ensuring continuous access to*** energy ***for people in vulnerable situations as a guarantee measure to prevent exclusion and poverty***), and increasing the ESF+ minimum allocation for food and material deprivation support. |

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| Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 105 votes to 74 and five abstentions.**Amendment 7** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.4.4****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| While respecting national competences, EU policy should promote a universal right to adequate housing and encourage Member States to expand social housing and provide financial support for those affected by the housing shortage. The EESC ***proposes a*** new ‘affordable housing target’ within the Action Plan ***to implement the EPSR***, followed up with an EU homelessness strategy based on benchmarking of national best practices and mutual learning. The APS should support the mutual understanding of the complexity of homelessness, requiring a mix of support and strengthening of cooperation between social administrations between Member States. | While respecting national competences, EU policy should promote a universal right to adequate housing and encourage Member States to expand social housing and provide financial support for those affected by the housing shortage. The EESC ***notes the discussion regarding the*** new ‘affordable housing target’ within the Action Plan, followed up with an EU homelessness strategy based on benchmarking of national best practices and mutual learning. The APS should support the mutual understanding of the complexity of homelessness, requiring a mix of support and strengthening of cooperation between social administrations between Member States. |

Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 112 votes to 75 and six abstentions.

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| **Amendment 8** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.4.7****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| It is paramount that the APS addresses the challenges faced by older people in terms of risk of poverty, social exclusion and loneliness. It is crucial that pension reforms ***- improve*** older people’s standard of living. | It is paramount that the APS addresses the challenges faced by older people in terms of risk of poverty, social exclusion and loneliness. It is crucial that pension reforms, ***while based on special features of national social security systems, take into consideration, among other aspects, the need to maintain*** older people’s standard of living. |

A compromise was endorsed by the assembly:

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Compromise*** |
| It is paramount that the APS addresses the challenges faced by older people in terms of risk of poverty, social exclusion and loneliness. It is crucial that pension reforms ***-*** improve older people’s standard of living. | It is paramount that the APS addresses the challenges faced by older people in terms of risk of poverty, social exclusion and loneliness. It is crucial that pension reforms ***while based on special features of national social security systems take into consideration, among other aspects, the need to maintain and where possible, to*** improve older people’s standard of living. |

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| **Amendment 9** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.4.9****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| Preventing energy poverty, ensuring equal access to energy and the security of energy supply at affordable prices should be a European priority. To this end, Member States should be encouraged to draw up national plans and policies to ***eradicate*** energy poverty, integrating and ensuring consistency across all EU and national policy and funding instruments[1].[1] OJ C 486, 21.12.2022, p. 88, 1.1, 1.3. | Preventing energy poverty, ensuring equal access to energy and the security of energy supply at affordable prices should be a European priority. To this end, Member States should be encouraged to draw up national plans and policies to ***effectively*** ***tackle*** energy poverty, integrating and ensuring consistency across all EU and national policy and funding instruments[1].[1] OJ C 486, 21.12.2022, p. 88, 1.1, 1.3. |

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| Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 113 votes to 75 and two abstentions.**Amendment 10** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.4.10****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| Critically, as services digitalise, accessible, affordable and physical alternatives, as well as easy-to-navigate assistance, must be maintained to prevent digital exclusion. The EESC calls for a memorandum on the use of AI and data-driven welfare policies to fully assess their implications and ***the*** potential risks of surveillance***, control and discrimination against people experiencing poverty and other vulnerable groups. An impact assessment on the use of digital tools for the working conditions of social workers should also be conducted***. | Critically, as services digitalise, accessible, affordable and physical alternatives, as well as easy-to-navigate assistance, must be maintained to prevent digital exclusion. The EESC calls for a memorandum on the use of AI and data-driven welfare policies to fully assess their implications***, both the opportunities*** and potential risks of surveillance. |

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| Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 112 votes to 71 and one abstentions.**Amendment 11** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 3.6.3****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| Crucially, funding ***must*** support the ambition to substantially reduce ***and*** eradicate poverty. Policymakers should align anti-poverty funding with tax systems that preserve economic dynamism while ensuring fairness ***(potentially advocating progressive national tax reforms e.g. on wealth and capital gains tax)***. The progress toward poverty targets and policy reforms and investment to implement the APS and NAPS should be included in the semester recommendation. Social investment in the CRSs, especially in education, healthcare, social protection and social inclusion in the National Reform Programme (NRPs) and through the NAPS, should be ***prioritised***. This can involve ***prioritising*** social inclusion in the MFF post-2027 ***(potentially linking funds to NAPS adoption) and reforming EU economic governance (European Semester, fiscal rules) to prioritise social and environmental objectives and exclude necessary investments from deficit calculations***. | Crucially, funding ***should*** support the ambition to substantially reduce ***poverty including*** eradicate ***extreme*** poverty. Policymakers should align anti-poverty funding with tax systems that preserve economic dynamism while ensuring fairness. The progress toward poverty targets and policy reforms and investment to implement the APS and NAPS should be included in the semester recommendation. Social investment in the CRSs, especially in education, healthcare, social protection and social inclusion in the National Reform Programme (NRPs) and through the NAPS, should be ***duly addressed***. This can involve ***appropriately considering*** social inclusion in the MFF post-2027. |

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| Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 117 votes to 75 and two abstentions.**Amendment 12** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 1.1****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| Poverty-reduction policies lie at the core of the EU’s values and call for urgent and effective action. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) outlines proposals for a comprehensive EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, with a rights-based approach, recognising poverty as a violation of ***fundamental rights*** and systemic injustice. It calls for a multidimensional definition of poverty, encompassing social, psychological, political and gender dimensions alongside material deprivation. The APS should ***set*** ambitious, measurable ***tools and*** targets***, such as reducing*** poverty ***by 50%*** by 2030, and improve poverty measurement methodologies. | Poverty-reduction policies lie at the core of the EU’s values and call for urgent and effective action. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) outlines proposals for a comprehensive EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, with a rights-based approach, recognising poverty as a violation of ***human dignity*** and systemic injustice. It calls for a multidimensional definition of poverty, encompassing social, psychological, political and gender dimensions alongside material deprivation. The APS should ***continue to pursue*** ambitious, measurable targets ***for the progressive reduction of*** poverty by 2030 ***to the maximum of Member States’ available resources***, and improve poverty measurement methodologies. |

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| Put to the vote, the amendment was rejected by 107 votes to 76 and two abstentions.**Amendment 13** (tabled by René BLIJLEVENS, Mira-Maria DANISMAN, Antonio GARCÍA DEL RIEGO, Mariya MINCHEVA, Bogdan PREDA, Christa SCHWENG, Isabel YGLESIAS)**Point 1.2****Amend as follows:** |  |

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Amendment*** |
| ***A*** cornerstone of the APS is ensuring adequate income and social protection to ***establish binding*** standards across Member States. The strategy should address barriers to accessing social benefits and ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) corresponding principles. | ***The EESC stresses that the APS should align poverty reduction goals with productivity-enhancing and employment-generating strategies. Poverty and its root causes should be combatted by a multifaceted set of policies and measures such as labour markets, education and training, social security, social and health services and housing. One*** cornerstone of the APS is ensuring adequate income and social protection to ***implement*** standards across Member States ***along the lines of the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income***. The strategy should address barriers to accessing social benefits and ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) corresponding principles. |

A compromise was endorsed by the assembly:

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| ***Section opinion*** | ***Compromise*** |
| ***A*** cornerstone of the APS is ensuring adequate income and social protection to establish ***binding*** standards across Member States. The strategy should address barriers to accessing social benefits and ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) corresponding principles. | ***The EESC believes that productivity-enhancing and employment-generating strategies are a key factor to tackle poverty. One*** cornerstone of the APS is ensuring adequate income and social protection to establish ***and implement*** standards across Member States ***along the lines of the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income***. The strategy should address barriers to accessing social benefits and ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) corresponding principles. |

The opinion was adopted by 126 votes to 46, and 20 abstentions.

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