



# The Workers' Group

MAY 2019

## This is the Europe we want: Make it possible!

*The EESC Workers' Group comprises representatives from national trade unions, confederations and sectoral federations. Its members represent over 80 trade union organizations – the vast majority of them affiliated to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) or its sectoral federations.*

*Our key priorities have always been the defence of fundamental freedoms and labour rights. Full employment, the improvement of the living and working conditions of workers in Europe and the well-being of all EU citizens, as well as of workers and their families in other continents, are our objectives.*

**We want a European Union that delivers for the many, not for the few:** that is social, democratic and progressive. We will work towards a EU that protects and enables workers and other citizens and provides secure and fair perspectives for all by tackling the challenges of globalization, digitalization and climate change in a coherent way.

The four freedoms, namely the freedom of movement of products, citizens, services and capital, which together enable trade and economic development, employment, creativity and innovation, exchange of knowledge, development of infrastructure in remote areas, are the essence of Europe, but **fundamental social rights must take priority over economic freedoms and competition rules.**

The **EU project** has brought some economic and social progress, but **it has not spread evenly and not all citizens are in a position to benefit from its wealth.** The aim would be therefore for a **new Overarching Strategy** that is able to deliver in providing fully-fledged equal opportunities for all, where **economic, social and environmental factors are interrelated.**

The **European Pillar of social Rights** to be the main tool that obliges the Commission, the European Parliament and Member States for delivering at European and national level an **improvement in peoples**

**working and living conditions, that protects and enables citizens and rebalances market-driven EU integration.**

For that reason, we call for a **new 'Social Contract' with a Social Action Programme** that offers all citizens a fairer and more equal society that guarantees a better life for the many, not the few. For that, we call for:

- The principle of **equal pay for equal work at the same place** must be respected and enforced.
- All workers to have the **same rights:** no job without a contract, no job without collective bargaining protection, no job without a decent salary, and a ban on zero-hours contracts and bogus self-employment.
- A Europe with **strong welfare states, social safety nets and strong public services.**
- Fighting for **decent minimum wages** across Europe.
- Addressing **disparities and social, economic and environmental inequalities.**
- **Effective social dialogue** and trade union membership are the best way to guarantee the protection of working people and increased

wages.

- **Social dialogue** as a tool for implementing the sustainable development agenda.
- Social dialogue requires an enabling environment and an effective institutional framework. This begins with **respect for freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.**
- The EU to work with the social partners to promote **sound industrial relations practices and functioning labour administrations.**
- A **EU framework on safeguarding and strengthening workers' information and consultation and participation.**
- **Minimum requirements for unemployment insurance in terms of net replacement rate, entitlement period and coverage rate, and also of training and activation** to support workers in the event of unemployment.
- Introducing a **binding European framework for a decent minimum income in Europe, enabling minimum income schemes.**

## We call for



*A sustainable Europe that guarantees citizens' wellbeing and ensures social and ecological progress, leaving no person and no territory behind in the green and digital transitions.*

# Fairness and Justice

Europe needs to become a **truly social union, where social rights must become legally enforceable**, empowering workers, fighting poverty and reducing inequality.

► A **fair and functioning single market** that **prevents social dumping and guarantees equal pay for equal work at the same place.**

► Implementing a transformative and measurable **agenda for gender equality** through an **integrated and ambitious five-year EU gender equality strategy**, including eliminating gender pay gaps via a specific tool that makes companies responsible for declaring wage policies and their strategies for banning gender pay gaps.

► The right to **quality healthcare, education and decent pensions** is universal and must be defended.

► Europe needs a **comprehensive approach to Migration policy**, based on shared responsibility, fair allocation, convergence and respect for fundamental rights and with new legal channels for migration.

► **Young Europeans** must be empowered and given the skills to shape their future and become active citizens.

# EMU that works for the people

In order to secure the vital support of citizens, the social dimension needs to be strengthened, and democratic, transparent forms of euro area governance, aimed at ensuring economic prosperity and a high standard of living, must be employed.

► A European Semester with a strong social dimension and environmental binding social indicators.

► Fair taxation and redistribution of wealth .

► Macroeconomic dialogue as alternative to competitiveness councils.

► An investment policy for quality jobs.

► Securing the necessary public and private investment.

► The managed flexibility in the Stability and Growth Pact should be harnessed to allow

the use of the “golden rule of public investment” according to which investments and associated current spending should be implemented in such a way as to achieve future benefits and effects.

► Safeguards social rights & democracy .

► Respects the autonomy of social partners, including collective bargaining.

# Just transition to the Digital Age

We call for a legislative framework on just transitions where social dialogue and robust collective bargaining systems between the social partners should prevail as key tools in order to anticipate and manage the transitions and changes in order to

► Improve labour law to address new forms of work

and to end precarious work.

► Provide Health and safety for digital jobs.

► A universal entitlement to lifelong learning that enables people to acquire skills and to reskill and upskill;

► Step up investments in the institutions, policies and strategies that will support people through future of work transi-

tions;

► Provide a fair share in digital dividends for workers

► Just transition requires investment in effective and integrated social protection systems.

► Secure data protection for workers & citizens.

# Sustainable Europe



Europe must be a leader in fighting for the environment and tackling climate change,

► Sustainability is a **forward looking process** which must be driven by a strong political will and determination.

► We need a Sustainable Europe by shifting our economies towards a resilient and cooperative, resource-efficient, low-carbon and socially inclusive development.

► Behaviors, actions and decisions of governments, companies, workers, citizens and consumers are driven by the realization of their economic, environmental and social impacts in a responsible manner.

► EU must transform a linear economy into a circular, carbon-free economy. Circular economy policies should ensure that cycles

are long-lasting, small, local and clean.

► Sustainable investment is a key instrument for steering and fostering the process of strengthening Europe's leadership towards a sustainable society, which stimulates high-quality job creation, renewable energy, affordable and accessible green public transport, eco-designed digital technology, research and innovation. This is particularly crucial for young people and regions which have high unemployment or are experiencing structural changes.

**A STRONG  
AND UNITED  
EUROPE  
THAT  
PROMOTES  
A BETTER  
WORLD.**

## Strategy for strong democracy in Europe

European institutions and Member States must uphold the rule of law and fundamental rights, increase transparency and fight corruption, and effectively use the Lisbon Treaty.

► The EU needs a comprehensive mechanism to regularly monitor the state of democracy and the rule of law.

► Full involvement of the European Parliament in all policy areas.

► Strong social dialogue and role of social partners in EU policy.

► Effective use of participatory consultative bodies.

► Proper consultation of representative organisations.

► Transparency for involvement of relevant actors in the legal process.

► The EU must support minority groups against any discrimination.

► The EU needs to provide protection to trade unions, activists, journalists and whistle-blowers who expose illegal conduct, abuses of law or hidden information in the public interest.

## Fair globalisation and trade policy

The EU's trade policy **must reflect and be consistent** with its own internal values as the global leader in sustainability. For that, the EU should reinforce and improve its model of high standards in the environmental and social spheres by:

► An **ambitious trade policy agenda** at all levels that ensures sustainable development and

creates sustainable growth and high-quality jobs in the EU while promoting rules-based trade policy at the global level.

► With stronger role for ILO in global policy.

► With social clauses protecting workers' rights in all trade agreements.

► International cooperation, promotion of workers' rights & soli-

arity with refugees.

► Trade agreements and policies with high social and environmental standards which safeguard quality public services.

► All trade agreements must include a monitoring mechanism which involves civil society to guarantee that commitments and the risks and opportunities by the opening-up of trade are monitored.



# The Workers' Group

**Our priorities**



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Workers' Group

Groupe des travailleurs