European Economic and Social Committee
Press Release

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**The EESC to take part in the Gothenburg social summit in a show of support for the European Pillar of Social Rights**

**Without social rights, backed by a sound and sustainable economic basis, the future of Europe will be at stake, says the EESC**

A delegation of members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), led by its **President Georges Dassis**, will take part in the high-level social summit in Gothenburg on 17 November to voice the EESC's support for the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), in line with the Committee’s active and important contribution to the ongoing discussion about the future of Europe and its social dimension.

At the summit, the EPSR will be proclaimed jointly by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

Representing the voice of organised civil society in the EU, the EESC highlights the pressing need for a strong and sustainable social dimension of the EU, which is, together with economic growth, a prerequisite for securing the EU's future.

The EESC already welcomed the debate on the social dimension of Europe and EPSR in two opinions adopted this year, following referrals from the Commission, a [hearing](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/impact-social-dimension-and-european-pillar-social-rights-future-european-union) with key stakeholders and the outcomes of national debates with civil society organised by the EESC in all Member States involving some 1800 participants.

Apart from urging the Member States to endorse the EPSR, as this would entail *“a political commitment on their part to deliver on it”,* the EESCis also putting a strong emphasis on the need for a clear roadmap for the EPSR's implementation.

Emphasising the significant contribution of the EESC to the EPRS initiative since its inception, the President of the EESC **Georges Dαssis** noted that ensuring citizens' support and bringing Europe closer to people’s needs is a prerequisite for advancing the European project along a path of equitable, sustainable and shared social and economic progress. To this end, the European Union needs to effectively address concerns manifest in every European society spurred by uncertain prospects, unemployment, rising inequality and a lack of opportunities. Welcoming the Proclamation of a European Pillar of Social Rights as a major political commitment to social progress, President Dassis highlighted the importance of strengthening social rights by deploying pertinent legislation, policy-making mechanisms and financial instruments to ensure that the EPRS makes an enduring positive difference in people’s lives supporting European integration in the 21st century.

**Gabriele Bischoff**, President of the EESC's Workers' Group and rapporteur of the two EESC opinions on the EPSR said*: "Time is running out for Europe to deliver for the working people. After the proclamation, the key priority for the EU institutions must be a concrete plan for the implementation of the Social Pillar. European workers and citizens need to feel that the EU has not let them down. They need tangible actions to improve their living and working conditions and restore their faith in the EU. There can be no future for Europe without a social dimension. We want upward convergence inside and between the Member States, a strong Social Pillar to finally put an end to the gaping inequalities".*

**Jacek Krawczyk**, President of the EESC's Employers' Group said: *"Competitiveness is a precondition to maintaining the European social model. That is why it is important combine economic and social concerns in a balanced way. Without economic success none of the EU Member States could afford its social system. Member States must adapt labour markets and social protection systems to changing realities.* *Any action in the field of labour markets and social systems must respect the division of competences and the subsidiarity principle*."

**Luca Jahier**, President of the EESC's Various Interests Group, highlighted that: “*We have to build a European Union which is sustainable and cares for all, including its most vulnerable citizens. Implementing the EPSR through the European Semester could be a first step in this process. I am also particularly disappointed that the draft Proclamation on the EPSR does not mention neither civil society, nor the important contribution of the social economy to future transitions in our welfare systems and services. The future of work and the transition to Work 4.0 will have to be accompanied by a parallel transition to Welfare 4.0 and it is civil society which will drive this process."*

The EESC said that further efforts should be made to define common principles and strategies on better convergence of wagesand establishing or increasing minimum wages to adequate levels with full respect for the autonomy of social partners. It has stressed the importance of social dialogue and collective bargainingin a changing world of work.

The EESC has also expressed serious concern over the lack of enforcement of existing social rights and “the different worlds of compliance” with EU law in Member States.

The Gothenburg summit, co-hosted by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, will gather heads of state, the social partners and representatives of the EU institutions for a discussion on how to promote fair jobs and growth in the future.

On 16 November, the EESC will hold a side [event](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/what-role-social-economy-future-work) to the summit, which will focuson the role of Social Economy in the future of work.

**Background:**

The first EESC [opinion](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-pillar-social-rights) on the outline of the EPRS was adopted in January 2017.

The second [opinion](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/impact-social-dimension-european-pillar-social-rights-future-eu) was adopted last month, after the EESC was asked by the Commission for its input on the [Reflection Paper on the social dimension of Europe](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1496069993639&uri=CELEX%3A52017DC0250). The EESC decided to link this opinion with the [Recommendation and Proposal for an Interinstitutional Proclamation on the EPSR](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1496131945983&uri=CELEX%3A52017DC0251).

The EPSR is part of a broader discussion about the future of Europe, launched by the President Juncker in 2015 to build "a deeper and fairer Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)" and achieve a "triple A social Europe". It consists of 20 key principles and rights covering equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion.

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[VIDEO: How has the EESC made a difference](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.videos.41081)

*The European Economic and Social Committee is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. The Committee has 350 members from across Europe, who are appointed by the Council of the European Union. It represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. Its consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the EU decision-making process.*

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