

## **Strengthening minimum income protection in the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: Council adopts conclusions**

The Council adopted conclusions on strengthening minimum income protection in the EU with the aim to combat poverty and social exclusion during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council recognises that minimum income schemes contribute to the social protection of the most disadvantaged groups in society, including people hardest-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. They also have a stabilising effect for the economy as a whole. The Council also acknowledges that such schemes help peoples' inclusion in employment and society.

The conclusions invite the member states and the Commission to work together to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights which highlights the principle that everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring dignity at all stages of life.

Taking into account that it is for member states to design their social protection policies, the Council invites them to spare no efforts to ensure that their national schemes meet the recommendations of the EU and the International Labour Organization and function adequately to counter the negative consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. The Commission is requested to initiate an update of the Union framework to effectively support and complement the policies of members states on national minimum income protection.

The conclusions also invite the member states and the Commission, in accordance with their competences and national labour markets models, to address the gaps in minimum income protection and to use in the best possible way support from EU funds, such as the European Social Fund Plus and the Next Generation EU recovery instrument.

The conclusions were adopted by written procedure.

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