



European Pillar of Social Rights: a renewed commitment to protect and empower EU's citizens

Brussels, 22 July 2026

Today, the European Commission adopted a [Communication](#) on the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). It confirms that the Pillar remains the EU's social shield and compass for fairness in an age of fast transformation, for a Europe that protects and empowers citizens. The Communication assesses progress made in strengthening social rights across the EU and identifies concrete priorities for further action. It also charts the way for anticipating and managing structural change, so as to seize the opportunities of ongoing transformations and ensure that Europe's social model continues to deliver fairness and prosperity.

The Communication highlights three areas which require urgent, additional attention. New and rapidly evolving, these are complementary to ongoing Commission initiatives on jobs, skills, mobility and poverty reduction: addressing affordability and the cost of living; harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) for the future of work and shared prosperity; and reducing inequalities and expanding fairness and equal opportunities.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, said: *"Our social model is one of our greatest strengths. As technological shifts transform our daily lives, and as rising costs put pressure on households across our Union, we stand firm in our commitment to fairness, opportunity and solidarity. The European Pillar of Social Rights is our compass – setting the course for a stronger Social Europe that protects, empowers and supports our citizens."*

Key areas for fairer labour markets and stronger welfare systems

- **Addressing affordability and the cost-of-living**

As many households continue to face high costs for housing, energy, services and essential goods, the Commission will continue supporting measures that reduce the risk of poverty and strengthen access to essential services.

Since the adoption of the [EU Directive](#), minimum wages have increased significantly across the EU, as highlighted in its upcoming monitoring report. Quality jobs are one clear answer to the affordability pressures facing many in Europe.

Significant talent remains untapped outside the labour market. Facilitating the transition from inactivity to work matters not only for labour market inclusion and competitiveness, but also for reducing poverty and exclusion.

To this end, and with a view to exploring possible further measures, in full respect of subsidiarity, the Commission is launching a first-phase consultation of EU social partners on the possible direction of an EU action on activation of people facing significant barriers to employment. This consultation will directly inform the Commission's work in tackling poverty, exclusion, labour market inclusion, and competitiveness.

- **Harnessing artificial intelligence for the future of work and shared prosperity**

The rapid development and adoption of AI is transforming labour markets, offering major opportunities for innovation, productivity, learning and growth - but raising also important critical questions about the future of jobs, education, skills, social inclusion and public services.

The Communication acknowledges the urgency for Europe to be ready for these profound changes, ensuring that citizens, workers and businesses fully benefit from AI's potential. To this end, the Commission will establish a new high-level group on the impact of AI on the labour market.

- **Reducing inequalities and expanding fairness and equal opportunities**

The Communication reaffirms the EU's commitment to reducing persistent inequalities that undermine social and territorial cohesion, weaken the EU's long-term sustainability, innovation and competition capacity and demographic fabric. Despite progress during the last years, inequalities persist in all areas of life, requiring continued efforts.

The Communication sets out actions to improve equal opportunities, in key areas, including support to SMEs to implement the [Pay Transparency Directive](#) and presenting the upcoming Right to Stay initiative and the EU Youth Strategy post-2027.

Later this year, the Commission will present a Quality Jobs Act, following the [Quality Jobs Roadmap](#). It will also reflect on new indicators to measure job quality across the EU, complementing the existing [2030 EU targets](#) on employment, skills and poverty reduction.

Background

Adopted in 2017, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) sets out 20 principles to ensure fair working conditions, social protection, and equal opportunities. It has guided EU policies, from the [European Child Guarantee](#) to the [EU Minimum Wage Directive](#), proving that investing in people is both a social and an economic imperative.

At the 2021 [Porto Social Summit](#), EU leaders, institutions and social partners agreed to put social at the heart of our policies. They set [three EU social targets for 2030](#) on employment, training and poverty reduction.

For more information

[Factsheet](#)

[Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

[Staff Working Document: Review of the 2021 Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[First stage social partner consultation on activation](#)

[Webpage on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

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Quote(s):

"Our social model is one of our greatest strengths. As technological shifts transform our daily lives, and as rising costs put pressure on households across our Union, we stand firm in our commitment to fairness, opportunity and solidarity. The European Pillar of Social Rights is our compass – setting the course for a stronger Social Europe that protects, empowers and supports our citizens."
Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

"Social Europe is not a cost. It is the foundation of our prosperity. The European Pillar of Social Rights has been our shield in crises and our roadmap to recovery. Now, as AI transforms work, living costs rise, and inequalities persist, we must recommit to the Pillar's principles. We are reaffirming our commitment to a social Europe that equips people for change, protects them against new risks and creates opportunities for everyone."
Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness

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[Read-out of the weekly meeting of the von der Leyen Commission by Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, on the Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)