

## **Conclusions of the Annual Meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries-General of the National ESCs of the EU**

Malta, 22-23 June 2017

The effects of the multiple crises suffered by the EU have exposed significant shortcomings with respect to the fairness, inclusiveness and efficiency of labour markets. This is evidenced not least by the fact that 20.9 million people across the EU were unemployed in 2016, of whom almost one half were unemployed for more than one year and over one fifth were under the age of 25. Employment rates for women remain markedly lower than those for men, and income inequalities are generally on the rise. The number of people at risk of poverty remains at around the 2008 level, thus falling significantly short of the progress expected to meet the target of having 20 million fewer people in poverty by 2020.

### **The delegations at the Annual Meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries-General of the National ESCs of the EU:**

1. Emphasise the importance of fair, inclusive and efficient labour markets within the context of intra-EU worker mobility, sustained by holistic and integrated policy approaches;
2. Agree that the European legal framework needs to promote and safeguard the mobility of workers to ensure deeper and also fairer labour markets which respond to supply and demand considerations while promoting competitiveness;
3. Reiterate that fair competition must be ensured in the Single Market while preventing discrimination between workers and ensuring a level playing-field among businesses;
4. Note that adequate and fair rights and obligations between workers and employers are essential for strong labour markets;
5. Recommend taking innovative approaches, supporting businesses and promoting policies that explicitly encourage business initiatives that are consistent with fair and responsible employment arrangements, particularly in preventing the misuse of non-standard forms of employment (NSE);
6. call on the EU to take more closely into account the social and environmental dimensions in order to reinforce social and territorial cohesion, a precondition for successful environmental and digital transition;
7. Call for due recognition of the particular circumstances faced by micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, leading to the adoption of targeted measures that harness the potential of these firms for growth, employment and the development of the Single Market;

8. Recommend social investment to enhance work-life balance by offering access to the labour market under equitable conditions;
9. Draw attention to the need to adopt specific measures facilitating labour market access for women and for heads of single-parent families;
10. Point out that investment in human capital through education, training and lifelong learning, underpinned by better skills-matching, is essential to well-functioning labour markets and to economic and social prosperity, and commend related initiatives such as the "Upskilling Pathways";
11. Observe once again that civil dialogue can contribute to the search for solutions to the problems of people who are in vulnerable situations or who are the victims of discrimination;
12. Stress that social and civil dialogue aimed at consensus-building is fundamental to the design and implementation of policies which contribute positively to worker protection and the competitiveness of enterprises;
13. Invite all relevant stakeholders, particularly the parties actively involved in social and civil dialogue across the EU, to collaborate in order to ensure that the future of work is fair and inclusive, offering quality employment opportunities for all and leading to genuine social progress;
14. Look forward to the Social Summit on 17 November 2017 as an opportunity to work together on a more social Europe focusing on the promotion of fair jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.