

The Dutch government has welcomed the introduction of the Pillar of Social Rights. Its principles contribute to a deeper and fairer single market. The Social Pillar provides guidelines for effective social and labour-market policies, and promotes the exchange of good practices between member states. In this way, it supports necessary reforms in the member states and encourages the process of upward socioeconomic convergence. Three years after its proclamation in Gothenburg, it is indeed very relevant to look to its implementation. Because it is primarily up to the member states to translate the principles into policies, it is very valuable that the European Commission has carried out an intensive consultation process on the social pillar action plan. This is highly appreciated.

The Netherlands believes that the social pillar action plan should be focused on cross border challenges that affect the EU as a whole and to policy areas where EU-action has added value. Such themes include upward socioeconomic convergence, the future of work, decent labour mobility, coordination of social security, and healthy and safe working conditions.

1. **Socioeconomic convergence.** Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were already significant differences in the economic performance of Member States. Sustained efforts are needed from the member states to strengthen the resilience of their economies and improve their socioeconomic performance.
2. **The future of work.** European labour markets are facing fundamental changes. Demographic trends will put the labour supply in various member states under pressure. In addition, developments such as digitalisation, robotisation and globalisation will change people's jobs and tasks. Some jobs will disappear, new forms of work will emerge, and changing production processes will also change the way work is organised. Technological advances can make it easier to organise work in non-traditional ways (e.g. platform work). The concepts of 'employer' and 'employee' are becoming less clear-cut. This gives rise to issues such as the rights and obligations associated with new forms of work, such as online platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the vulnerabilities of some workers. A discussion within the EU about cross-border digital platform work and other flexible working methods can certainly have added value. Re- and upskilling is also of great importance in this regard.
3. **Decent labour mobility.** We must strive for an economy that competes on innovation and quality rather than on working conditions.
4. **Coordination of social security.** Coordination of social security systems should support the free movement of workers. In addition, social security systems should be aimed at getting people back into work. In order to get out of this crisis as quick as possible, systems must contain incentives to encourage a quick return to work.
5. **Healthy and safe working conditions.** Too many workers are still dying each year as a result of exposure to carcinogens at work. There are still wide disparities in the levels of protection offered to workers in different member states. This needs to be addressed.

For all new initiatives, the Netherlands does not wish to tamper with the existing division of competences between the EU and its member states, as laid down in the treaty. This means that the further development of the social dimension should take place within the boundaries of the present legal and financial framework. Where new legislation is necessary, it should be aimed at specifying policy goals (goal-oriented legislation) rather than at formulating detailed rules for reaching these goals (means-orientated regulation). This will allow scope for national variation in regulatory practice, which

respects the specific characteristics and circumstances of national systems. And finally, enforcement of our current rules and regulations should be improved.

In May 2019, the Dutch government has sent a more elaborated version of its view on the social dimension of the EU to the house of representatives, please find attached this version as well.