



THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

A **socialplatform** explainer



On 8 March 2016 the European Commission announced its intention to introduce a European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar will apply to Eurozone countries, with other Member States able to opt-in.

THE PILLAR CAN BE DIVIDED INTO 3 MAIN CATEGORIES:

1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

This encompasses life-long learning and skills training, flexible and secure labour contracts, gender equality and work-life balance.



2 FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

This will focus on adequate minimum wages, employment conditions, health and safety and giving a stronger voice to workers and their unions.



3 ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL PROTECTION

This will cover policies aimed at including people in society and enabling them to live a life in dignity, including access to services and adequate minimum income.



BACKGROUND



The proposal on the Pillar came after European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stated that he wanted to create a “social ‘triple A’ rating” for the EU, drawing a comparison with the EU’s financial ambitions.



Social Platform was joined by many other civil society organisations and individuals in questioning how this social rating could be achieved. The EU has historically been “soft” on social affairs, leaving the majority of issues to be decided at a purely national level by Member State governments. This is why we welcome the Commission’s proposal on the Pillar.

WHAT IS SOCIAL PLATFORM'S OPINION?



The promotion of social standards has been a Social Platform priority for a number of years, but despite even former-President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso recognising that the EU is facing a “social emergency” the political will to act has been lacking.

In 2016 we responded to the Commission’s public consultation on the Pillar: read our response [HERE](#).



The Pillar represents an opportunity for the concept of social standards to be pushed forward as a way to respond to the social needs of people living in the EU – not just those in employment, but all people. Quality employment should be a result of improved social rights. Similarly, the social rights of people living in non-Eurozone countries are just as valid as those in countries with the Euro, which is why we will continue to advocate for the Pillar to be applicable to all Member States.

Read our position paper on social standards [HERE](#).



WHAT NEXT?

On 26 April 2017 the European Commission is scheduled to publish its first concrete proposals covering elements of the Pillar, including on work-life balance and access to social protection for all. Follow updates [HERE](#).