December 13, 2013

To: President Van Rompuy
Heads of State and Government

Letter to the European Council of December 19-20, 2013

Restore the balance between social and economic governance

Dear President,
Dear Prime-Minister,

European integration and the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union will not be achieved, if the EU is committing itself to a social dimension in words only, while not taking concrete actions to deliver on this.

We deeply regret that European governance, as reflected in the 2014 Annual Growth Survey (AGS), still fails to give credibility to Europe 2020 and the European Semester process. The focus continues to be on austerity, emphasising competiveness and growth without taking proper account of the social implications of current macroeconomic policies. Reiterating last year's priorities of the AGS or agreeing to have a scoreboard of social and employment indicators only as a mere analytical tool of the European Semester, will not solve the ongoing social crisis in Europe.

Social Platform, the largest coalition of social NGOs in the European Union, calls for a revision of the EU's macro-economic approach to ensure European governance is consistent with the EU obligations enshrined in Article 9 TFEU by restoring the balance between social and economic governance. Such rebalancing needs a coherent social strategy. Not the least, it also requires stakeholder involvement. Social Platform is poised to play its part in current and future stakeholder consultations.

We need to set the right priorities and take concrete actions to build an EU with a genuine social dimension that delivers on the Europe 2020 poverty and employment targets. We urge the Council to consider the following:

1) **Perform an ex-ante and ex-post social and gender impact assessment of policy reforms.** The results of this assessment should be acted upon to help ensuring macro-economic objectives do not prevent the realisation of social priorities but enable them. This will also support your commitment to further enhance the coordination of economic, employment and social policies.
2) **Meet the request of the European Parliament to identify concrete benchmarks for the indicators in the Social Scoreboard**.[1] Once the benchmarks are reached, action should be triggered to address the problem in a structural and effective way.
3) **Ensure equal treatment of the EPSCO and ECOFIN Councils in all European governance processes** and in particular for the work on the European Semester and the deepening of the EMU, to ensure the EU and its member states deliver on their social priorities and to ensure the coherence of European governance.

We are convinced that well designed and coherent social policies are at the centre of sustainable growth, and are key to re-establishing the confidence of people in the European project. We, therefore, call on you to consider our proposals during your discussions at the December Council.

Yours sincerely,

Heather Roy
President

Pierre Baussand
Director

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 47 pan-European networks of NGOs, we campaign to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

[1] Requested by the EP in its Resolution on the EC Communication on the Social Dimension of the EMU, November 21, 2013.

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