European Minister of Employment & Social Affairs
Via email

Brussels, 2 October 2015

Dear Minister,

A social governance to restart our economy

Ahead of the EPSCO council meeting on 5 October, we once again draw your attention to the European Union's social emergency. The on-going effect of the economic crisis has led to Member States prioritising economic policy over social and employment policy, when in fact the Member States that best resisted the crisis were those who have invested in strong social governance.

The Luxembourg Presidency's background note highlights that realisation of a social "triple A" rating will become increasingly difficult if our decision-makers do not commit to reducing social divergence. Current social divergences demonstrate that they are intrinsically connected to the Economic and Monetary Union. We urge you to consider the following recommendations in order to avoid a race to the bottom between and within EU countries:

1. Engage with the European Commission to develop European social standards regarding adequate social protection (including minimum income and unemployment benefits), minimum wage and access to quality social services. This will aid upward social convergence and ensure that all people can enjoy their social and economic rights across the lifecycle.

2. Organise joint meetings of EPSCO and ECOFIN for the Eurozone to discuss political and practical strategies and follow up to ensure equal value is given to the positions of both Council formations.

3. Social governance should be embedded in the Semester process - one of the main drivers of economic convergence among member states. EPSCO should propose concrete recommendations for the implementation of all Europe 2020 social headline targets in the Annual Growth Survey (AGS). It should assess the social dimension of CSRs and take action in case of non-implementation.

For a full outline of all of our recommendations on social governance, please consult our position paper.

The only way to restore people's faith in the European project is by showing people in the EU that Europe works for them, not against them. We look forward to seeing a real commitment made to strong social governance that tackles the crippling poverty, social exclusion and inequalities faced by millions of people every day.

Yours sincerely,

Jana Hainsworth
President

Pierre Baussand
Director