Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission
Via email

Brussels, 28 February 2017

Dear President Juncker,

RE: Social Platform's recommendations in view of the College's reflection on the White Paper on the Future of Europe and the EMU

This evening and tomorrow the College will discuss the White Paper on the future of Europe and the EMU.

Next month the EU will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. However, we are witnessing rising populism and extremism across the continent, with increasing disengagement of people from the EU project. Economic recovery is very fragile, especially for some Member States in the euro area, and we are still facing a social emergency due to widespread inequality and precariousness. These negative trends cast a shadow on the future of the European project. While bringing the EU out of present turmoil and making it stronger is still possible, success is hinged on whether the EU puts social rights at the very heart of its work.

As the largest civil society alliance working on social rights, we are ready to support the Commission in prioritising social rights alongside economic policies. We urge the College to take into account the following recommendations in its reflection on the future of Europe:

- Ensure that the White Paper on the future of Europe and the EMU includes the establishment of fiscal capacity at EU level and the creation of solidarity instruments at euro area level, such as an EMU-wide unemployment benefit scheme.

- Guide Member States' reforms on taxation to ensure adequate resources for healthcare, housing, social, employment and education services, as well as adequate social protection. This should be done by fighting tax evasion and avoidance, tackling corruption in public administration and ensuring fairer redistribution.

- Allow public social investment that has a clear positive impact on economic growth benefit from "budgetary flexibility" when assessing the compliance of Member States' deficits and debts with the EU's macro-economic rules. Investment in areas such as early chilhood education, active labour market policies and affordable social housing can increase labour productivity and reduce societal inequality, and can generate savings in public budgets in the medium- and long-term. In addition, continue systematically promoting public social investment in the framework of the European Semester, and use the European Structural and Investment Funds in a more targeted way so as to steer policy reforms at Member State level towards social investment.

- Take the opportunity of the revision of the Multi-annual Financial Framework and the launch of the post-2020 EU Programmes to promote a sustainable development agenda in the EU and beyond, in line with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Carry out a thorough assessment of the implementation of the Fiscal Compact, including its social impact, before its possible integration into the Community framework.

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.

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At a time when national interests diverge and place Europe's future at risk, avoid creating first and second class citizens in the EU when developing measures to increase convergence in the Eurozone; convergence must not sacrifice the unity and common destiny of all citizens.

These recommendations should feed into the proposal for an ambitious European Pillar of Social Rights that integrates a social dimension across all EU policy areas, using all existing EU instruments.

We look forward to working with you to contribute to the development of your reflection papers in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

Maciej Kucharczyk
Vice-President, Social Platform

CC. College of Commissioners

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