To: Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs
Via email

Brussels, 15 June 2018

Dear Minister,

RE: Social Platform urges Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs to reach an agreement on the directives on Work-Life Balance and on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions and to take active steps to be fully involved in negotiations on the European Social Fund plus

Social Platform welcomed and supported the European Commission's proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights as a promising step towards a strong social Europe. With its institutional proclamation in November 2017, the EU delivered a united message for a socially and economically just Europe.

At the EPSCO Council meeting of 21st June, the Council tables its proposals for a general approach to two directives: Work-Life Balance and on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions. Both are essential if the EU is to deliver on its commitment to the European Pillar of Social Rights. A year before the European Parliament elections it is more than ever important to show to citizens that the Europe Union takes concrete actions that will have a positive impact on their lives.

The directive on Work-Life Balance will impact the lives of families and carers by introducing minimum standards across Europe on paternity leave, parental leave, carers leave, and flexible working arrangements. It will further gender equality and ensure better balance of care responsibilities between men and women. It will bring benefits to the quality of life of children and others with care needs.
The directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions will benefit millions of workers across the EU, by granting them access to a set of basic rights. It will increase transparency in information, improve the predictability of working assignments and limit the abuses currently allowed by some forms of atypical work contracts.

Social Platform urges you to overcome remaining reservations and reach an agreement on a general approach for both directives.

The future EU budget must help deliver the renewed commitment to a more social Europe. The European Commission's Proposal for a Regulation on ESF+ has a strong focus on implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights across the EU and targeted support to employment and social challenges. Upcoming negotiations need to preserve this focus. For that reason it is essential that EPSCO is fully involved, just as AGRIFISH and ECOFIN Councils are involved in negotiations regarding their relevant funding instruments.

The ESF+ should step up its commitment for a more social Europe and dedicate at least 30% of funds to tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion. It needs to harness synergies between the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme and the Health Programme, without losing the specificities of each programme.

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 49 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. Social Platform acknowledges the financial support of the European Commission's 'Europe for Citizens' programme, managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

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EPSCO has the past knowledge to ensure the funding regulations deliver on their promise of a stronger social Europe.

We therefore encourage the upcoming Austrian Presidency to conduct ESF+ negotiations in the Working Party on Social Questions.

The EU has a unique opportunity to deliver on its promises for more inclusive growth and higher social standards. We count on EPSCO members to support improvements to the existing EU legal and institutional framework and strengthen relevant EU funding instruments.

Yours sincerely,



Jana Hainsworth
President

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