Brussels, 17 February 2021

To: the European Commission and Ministers of Social Affairs & Employment of EU Member States

Subject: Open letter on an ambitious and comprehensive Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights

Dear colleagues,

We are facing unprecedented health, economic, employment, and social crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated pre-existing social inequalities and brought to the surface the weaknesses of existing social protection systems. Social Platform, its member organisations and their members at national level represent the interests of social civil society organisations and people, including those who are in the most vulnerable situations and among the most strongly affected by the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. They also represent social economy actors and not-for-profit social service providers who support millions of people in their day-to-day lives and who have been key during this pandemic in ensuring care and support.

An Action Plan that ensures the comprehensive and ambitious implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Social Pillar) is more important than ever in the context of this pandemic to fully address its socio-economic impact and ensure Europe's social recovery.

Ahead of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting on 22 February 2021, we call on the European Commission and EU Member States to put forward an Action Plan that entails, among others, the following key features:

- **A comprehensive and ambitious implementation of the Social Pillar:**
  - The Action Plan must define concrete objectives, targets, and indicators for all 20 principles to measure progress against.
  - It must also set clear timelines, outlining how and when each of the principles will be implemented through EU and national level actions.

- **The importance of mainstreaming across policy areas**
  - Synergies must be established between existing and future initiatives and strategies which fall under the different principles of the Social Pillar. Equality principles should be mainstreamed.

- **A Social Pillar for all People in the EU:**
  - Existing and future initiatives put forward under the Social Pillar must always consider the impact on different groups of people, with a specific focus on groups

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in vulnerable situations, as otherwise, mainstream policies tend to not reach people in the most vulnerable and marginalised situations.

- **Establishing minimum social standards across the EU:**
  - Whenever possible, binding legislation should be used over soft-law instruments to set minimum level-playing fields for the implementation of the Social Pillar at the national level.

- **Closely monitoring national implementation:**
  - The effective implementation of the Social Pillar must be monitored through a reformed European Semester process that better balances social, environmental, economic and fiscal priorities.
  - The Social Scoreboard must be improved by setting targets and indicators that extensively cover all 20 Social Pillar principles. It must also better disaggregate data by characteristics other than sex, aiming at measuring the impact of policies on other specific groups in vulnerable situations. Only then can the complex barriers and reforms needed for improving the living and working conditions specifically for these groups be identified and translated into adequate policy responses.

- **Working together with organised civil society:**
  - The meaningful involvement of organised civil society in the implementation of the Social Pillar must be ensured, both at the European and the national level to leverage their expertise and guarantee that measures taken correspond to people's needs and experiences.

- **A post-2020 Strategy:**
  - The Social Pillar and its Action Plan must be included in an overarching post-2020 strategic framework building on the Europe 2020 Strategy, which should also fully integrate the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs as well as the European Green Deal.

Implementation with great ambition and at all levels of governance - EU, national, regional, and local - is key to ensure Europe's social recovery during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the time for the EU and Member States to take action, demonstrating that they are committed to building of a more resilient, socially just and inclusive Europe that leaves no one behind.

Yours sincerely,



Piotr Sadowski, Social Platform President

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