



socialplatform

To: College of Commissioner
Via email

Brussels, 1 June 2015

Dear President,
Dear Vice-President,
Dear Commissioner,

RE: Social Platform proposals for a strong social dimension in EU policies

On 3 June you will engage in an orientation debate on social policies. This is an important opportunity to give substance to the social "triple A" rating promised by President Juncker, which will require moving beyond employment policy. We encourage the Commission to address the following three areas during the debate.

Deliver on the Europe 2020 poverty target

In his opening statement in the European Parliament plenary session on 15 July 2014, President Juncker said, "*prosperity for all must be the maxim followed in both economic and social policies alike*". To reduce poverty and social exclusion, it is not enough to focus on growth and employment alone. **We support an integrated approach combining employment policies with social policies, including adequate social protection and services.** There are nearly 123 million people in the EU experiencing poverty - an increase of six million since 2008. We would have expected the European Semester processes to apply more pressure on member states to deliver on the target but this year only six countries received Country-Specific Recommendations related to poverty. It is important to discuss how the European economic governance system can work in favour of the more vulnerable in our societies.

Adopt social standards to address growing social divergences

In the same speech, President Juncker stated he "*believes it is necessary for all member states to put in place a minimum wage and basic guaranteed income. [The European Commission] will take action to achieve that end*". We know you share our concern over growing inequalities across Europe. Thus **we call on you to develop concrete proposals for European social standards with regards to income protection, minimum wage and social services**, inspired by the concept of the [ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors](#). This could guide member states towards upward social convergence, ensuring all people can enjoy their social rights across the lifecycle. Social divergences between and within EU countries (including poverty, income inequality, access to health and care services) are reaching unprecedented levels. For example, levels of child poverty range from 13% (FI) to 51% (BG) and the percentage of the population not having access to medical treatment varies from 0.1% (SI) to 10.7% (RO).

Prioritise social investment in public budgets, ESIF funding and EFSI

The President also said that "*services of general interest and public services should be safeguarded and cannot be subject to the fashionable whims of the day. Let us stand up for public services in Europe*". **We ask you to make investment in social, health and education services a priority and to protect social investment by making best use of flexibility within the excessive deficit rules of the**

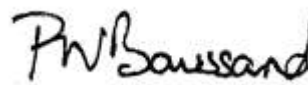
Stability and Growth Pact. More and better use should be made of the previously adopted Social Investment Package. Public budgets must be reinforced through EU structural and investment funds and, where feasible, through financial instruments, including the new European Fund for Strategic Investment. The latest Commission report on Employment and Social Development in Europe 2014 stresses that, *"the social consequences of low growth are such that there are clear benefits from an expansion in social investment across a range of areas: early childhood education and care; preventive healthcare; health and safety at work; retraining and lifelong education; and human capital more generally"*.

We welcome this first dedicated debate of 3 June and we are ready to contribute to shaping the European Commission's plan to develop a clear social dimension of EU policies to reduce poverty, promote high social standards and social investment.

Yours sincerely,



Jana Hainsworth
President



Pierre Baussand
Director