



socialplatform

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EU Social Summit – Don't wait 20 more years to address inequality

Inequality in the European Union deserves more than a 20 year gap in discussions. At today's [17 November] Social Summit in Gothenburg, Social Platform called for a greater priority to be given to the progress of social Europe at Heads of State and Government level. Only by demonstrating commitment to improving the social wellbeing of all people in Europe will the EU reclaim its democratic legitimacy and the trust of its people

The proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights is a first step; adopted today, Social Platform now anticipates the Pillar's implementation at Member State and EU levels. In particular, the repeated call for a better balancing of social and economic policies must be enacted immediately.

Participating in the first meeting of EU Heads of State and Government dedicated solely to social affairs in 20 years, Social Platform delegates called for EU and national leaders to deliver a strong social agenda that goes beyond employment. Only by doing so will it be possible to effectively tackle inequalities and promote upwards social convergence between and within Member States.

While employment should be a top priority of the EU, the social agenda is far broader than jobs and growth. Levels of in-work poverty, job insecurity and underemployment mean that while employment remains an important vehicle of social inclusion, it is not the panacea to all social problems, nor it is enough to protect people from hardship. If the EU and Member States are to build a truly inclusive Europe, they must implement policies that respect the rights and dignity of everybody in society, regardless of whether they are in employment or not.

Jana Hainsworth, President of Social Platform said:

“Social glue is what keeps society together. In the Social Summit the EU is taking a strong first step towards trying to reduce the inequality gap and increase our social cohesion. The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights must now address the inequalities experienced by the most vulnerable people in our societies: children, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and migrants to name just three groups. By embracing an agenda that fights inequality and leaves no one behind, EU and national leaders can begin to reverse mistrust in the political establishment, which threatens our democracy.”

Kélig Puyet, Director of Social Platform added:

“Civil society is an important partner for government, both in service delivery and in empowering people to voice their concerns and ideas, thereby helping to build more participatory democracies. Partnering with civil society can therefore help to restore trust in our democratic institutions. We hope that today's Social Summit and the signing of the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights signals the beginning of improved and increased involvement of civil society organisations in EU and national social policies. As well as complementing the expertise of social partners, civil society

is the vehicle to ensure that the needs of people in disadvantaged situations are brought to the political forefront.”

ENDS

Note to Editors

Consisting of 47 pan-European networks of NGOs, [Social Platform](#) campaigns to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives. An official Social Platform delegation attended the EU Social Summit and delivered [three key messages](#) on how to revive the EU to regain people’s trust.

Press enquiries

Helen Joseph
Communications & Media Officer, Social Platform
Tel. +32 (0) 489 77 26 94
Email helen.joseph@socialplatform.org