

2017, Piece BY Piece

socialplatform's highlights from 2017

2017 was an action-packed year for supporters of social justice in the EU, with huge steps forward in creating more social, sustainable and inclusive European societies. Here is a breakdown of Social Platform's 4 highlights of the year!

PUSHING 'SOCIAL' TO THE TOP OF THE AGENDA

For advocacy successes to have an impact on the lives of people, one must first ensure that the area at stake is put at the highest possible agenda-making level of political leaders. In 2017, this was mission accomplished in the social field in the European Union, and Social Platform has played a leading role in this process.

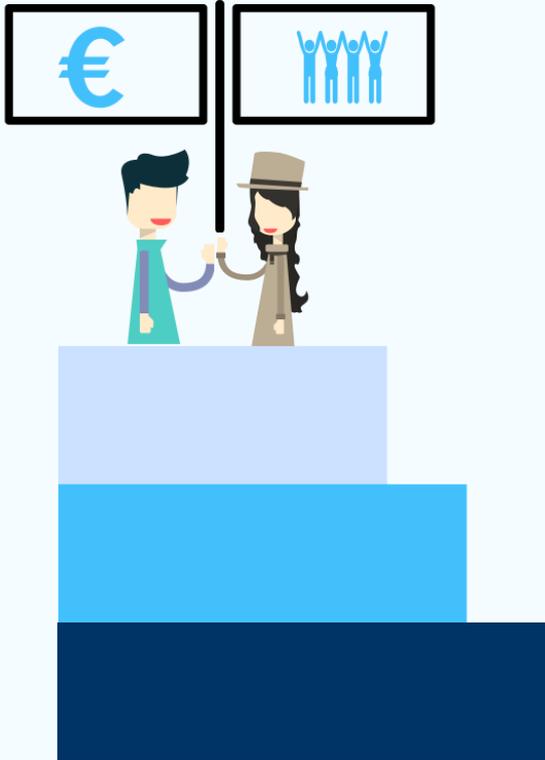
The new momentum around social policies was largely driven by the European Pillar of Social Rights, which promotes equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. The year began with a pivotal European Parliament vote in support of the Pillar and its aims, and ended with the Pillar being proclaimed by the Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council of the European Union.

The proclamation signing was the concluding moment of the EU Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth which took place in Gothenburg, Sweden on 17 November. The Summit marked the first occasion in 20 years that social policies have been exclusively discussed by EU Heads of State and Government.

Our work during the drafting and negotiation phases of the Pillar - from lobbying on the Parliament vote, to discussions with Member States, to regular high-profile speaking slots in EU level events - led to us being one of only two civil society organisations invited to attend and speak to EU leaders at the Social Summit.



WIDENING THE SCOPE BEYOND 'SOCIAL'



The relationship between social and economic policies are so intertwined that it is hard to make decisions on one without impacting the other. In 2017, the inseparable link between 'social' and 'economic' came to the forefront of EU debate at the European Commission's flagship annual economic event, the Brussels Economic Forum. Social Platform was one of only two civil society organisations speaking at the event; we were invited to join a panel on fighting inequalities in a context of modest growth, allowing us to make the case to a new audience for social investment – including in quality, accessible, affordable and available services – as one solution to reduce inequalities and boost long-term economic growth.

Going beyond 'social' also meant developing new partnerships and expanding our work on key issues like tax justice, showing that by addressing tax evasion and avoidance Member States could adequately finance social policies and services.

AMPLIFYING CIVIL SOCIETY'S VOICE

Together, Social Platform's members represent tens of thousands of local and national NGOs. In 2017 we had the chance to facilitate meetings and peer-learning among national branches of our members, as well as to promote the vital role of civil society in our democracies.

In May we held a fact-finding visit to Madrid to meet with our members' national organisations working in the social economy, many of which were featured in our exhibition of good practices held in Gothenburg on the eve of the EU Social Summit. The exhibition – which also featured inspiring practices in the fields of inclusion of migrants, services and quality employment – was accompanied by a panel discussion focusing on the role of civil society in the future of Europe.

In June, Social Platform organised an official workshop of the Civil Society Days, an annual event hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee. The workshop focused on how to empower civil society to act and grow in Europe. The event brought together experts from EU, national and local level to brainstorm ideas and share their experiences.



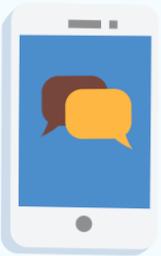
BUILDING SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS



In the words of American psychologist Rollo May, "Communication leads to community - that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing." As an organisation based on values, this rings especially true for Social Platform. In 2017 we aimed to increase our social media outreach and impact, with high levels of success!



In May we participated in the European Commission's first Twitter Take-over with DG ECFIN, responsible for economic and financial affairs. The aim was to open the debate on social investment ahead of our participation in the Brussels Economic Forum in June. Our 20 original tweets on the DG ECFIN account demonstrated the human side of economic policy, and garnered 219 retweets and 190 likes during the three hour take-over, outperforming much larger organisations who participated in the take-over in later weeks.



In October we launched a social media campaign with our member European Youth Forum ahead of our participation in the Social Summit. The month-long campaign relied on the participation of our members to create a multiplier effect, and our 15 original tweets accompanied by infographics developed in-house resulted in nearly 30,000 impressions.



WANT TO KNOW MORE? CONTACT US!

These four highlights are our key takeaways of 2017, but they're just the tip of the iceberg. Find out more about last year and how we plan to build on this momentum in 2018 by getting in touch!



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