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## 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

## RESOLUTION OF THE PRESIDUM OF CESI

*The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI) is a confederation comprising more than 40 national and European trade union organisations from over 20 European countries, with a total of more than 5 million individual members. Founded in 1990, CESI advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU. Most of CESI's members represent workers in the different fields and levels of public administrations and services, but CESI also represents private sector workers.*

Since the inception of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), CESI has been one of its strong proponents and contributed to its development through a participation in various consultations and conferences. CESI also established a dedicated internal working group to accompany the implementation of the EPSR. CESI has advocated on the EPSR based the following positions, guidance and resolutions: an initial position<sup>1</sup> and main messages<sup>2</sup> on the EPSR in 2016, an action memo for affiliates for a successful implementation of the EPSR in the Member States in 2017,<sup>3</sup> a contribution to a public consultation on an action plan to implement the EPSR in 2020,<sup>4</sup> and a resolution on requirements for a successful implementation of the EPSR in the Member States in 2021.<sup>5</sup>

During the last five years, socio-economic as well as political, military, and geo-strategic developments have been unexpected both in scope and nature.

When the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) was proclaimed in Gothenburg on November 17 2017, Europe was still recovering from the 2008 fallout of the financial crisis and faced unforeseen migration integration challenges. And while the Porto Social Summit with its presentation of an Action Plan to implement the EPSR took place in the midst of the Covid-pandemic in May 2021, this year, five years after the proclamation of the EPSR, Europe is still in crisis, as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, soaring inflation and supply chain bottlenecks that hinder economic development and thus labour markets.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CESI\\_Messages-Social-pillar\\_EN\\_20161201\\_ADOPTED.pdf](https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CESI_Messages-Social-pillar_EN_20161201_ADOPTED.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CESI\\_Main-messages-Social-pillar\\_EN\\_20160930.pdf](https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CESI_Main-messages-Social-pillar_EN_20160930.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Pillar-of-social-rights\\_Action-memo-for-members\\_EN-1.pdf](https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Pillar-of-social-rights_Action-memo-for-members_EN-1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-CESI-response-Social-pillar-action-plan-consultation\\_final-20201130.pdf](https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-CESI-response-Social-pillar-action-plan-consultation_final-20201130.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-CESI-resolution-Porto-Summit-on-the-European-Pillar-of-Social-Rights-final-1.pdf>

Not least in times of permacrisis that Europe has found itself in since the creation of the EPSR, the latter serves to remind what social Europe is and what it should be. As the EPSR stipulates in its 20 principles, it is about equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion.

The Action Plan of 2021 operationalises many of the principles by converting them into three headline targets to be achieved by 2030: At least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment, the gender employment gap should be halved compared to 2019, and at least 15 million people, at least 5 million of which children, should be lifted out of poverty or the risk of poverty.

This year, five years after the Gothenburg Summit and one year and a half after the Porto Social Summit, it is time to reflect on what has been achieved and what should still be done to ensure a more inclusive and fairer Europe.

The Presidium of CESI highlights:

1. With every crisis, with every new strain to public budgets, the Pillar with its 20 principles tells us what social Europe is and what it should be. No challenge or crisis should divert away from social targets. The Pillar remains the social compass.
2. The management of the challenges and crises that Europe has faced during the last years shows that that determined action creates societies more able to resist to external and internal shocks – where no one should be left behind. The Covid-19 crisis in particular revealed that investments in public services are preventative imperatives to creating resilient and fair societies that will be able to better face sudden and unexpected crisis of unknown scope and nature. Most of the EPSR's 20 principles cannot be delivered without well-equipped and well-performing public services – and they need to necessary funding and personnel to this end.
3. Looking back, even if mistakes were made, the EU has not fared too badly in the management of the Covid-19 pandemic – especially when considering the speed at which the pandemic evolved and the various uncertainties that existed. Both the landmark Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the SURE instrument helped preserve employment and continue to cushion socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Investment-related Instruments like the RRF and SURE, inspired by the principles of the EPSR, should be kept during future crises too.

4. The EU institutions have adopted and tabled significant legislation and initiatives to implement the EPSR at the EU level. This relates above all to the following:
  - i. New directives on work-life balance and on transparent working conditions, a forthcoming 'women on boards' directive, and a recent recommendation on access to social protection all represent determined steps to ensure social justice and upwards convergence across the 27 Member States.
  - ii. In particular, the recent new directive on minimum wages is a leap forward to bring adequate minimum wages and foster collective bargaining and, thus, the role of unions and social partners. If implemented and enforced fully, the directive is likely to also translate into higher wages and pay grades beyond minimum wages, hence addressing in-work poverty and social exclusion.
  - iii. Hopefully, a new platform economy directive will bring better employment and working conditions in the platform economy, and a new pay transparency directive will foster equal pay for equal work - in particular for women. If adopted and implemented, a recent proposal of the European Commission on adequate minimum incomes could lift large numbers of citizens out of poverty. A swift adoption and implementation of these three files is imperative.
5. Social and employment challenges however remain and are numerous and substantial. Continuing to make the EPSR a reality that achieving the headline targets of its Action Plan requires a sustained and joint commitment and endeavour by the EU institutions, Member States, local authorities, social partners, and civil society. The EPSR is, first and foremost, a political pledge. Delivering on it is a shared political commitment and responsibility towards future generations. It is also CESI's commitment.
6. The EPSR can only be made more known and successful if all actors are on board. Making the EPSR a reality will benefit not only workers and citizens, but also democracy. Social Europe needs complementary synergies and cooperation between social partners, civil society, the member states and the EU institutions to make every effort to bring – and keep- the EPSR more at the core of the political, legislative, and collective bargaining agendas at both EU and national levels.