

The Pillar of Social Rights must back public investment in quality public services



(20 January 2017) EPSU General Secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan, speaking before the European Commission unveils key social policies at the European Pillar of Social Rights Conference, on the 23rd of January, declared: 'The Pillar of Social Rights is a positive development if it results in public investment, in quality public services which address people's concerns for better care, social justice and secure jobs, for example. For this we need an end to austerity policies'.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) warns that this is the EU's last chance to tackle popular resentment towards the Union. Luca Visentini, General Secretary of the ETUC notes that 'President Juncker was elected by the European Parliament on the promise of a fairer and more social Europe. With the long-awaited Pillar of Social Rights he has the chance to deliver what he promised. The EU is in the last-chance saloon to tackle working people's anger towards the EU. It can either fiddle while people's fume, or it can offer a better deal for working people.

We expect an ambitious approach from the European Commission in which social rights are promoted and defended with the same urgency and commitment as economic and fiscal rules’.

The Commission’s proposals will be judged and accepted by European trade unions only if they make a real and positive difference to the lives of working people. Better access to public services and improved social security for example is what people need. We want to see enforceable and improved rights and a real role and place for social dialogue. Agreements between European and employers like the one between EPSU and the employers in central government administration should be acted upon by Commission and Council. Respect for trade union rights and promoting collective bargaining is what public service workers want. Workers need a pay increase.

The Council of Europe is also putting pressure on the European Commission to formally incorporate the European Social Charter into the European Pillar of Social Rights; this has the potential to give a series of fundamental social and economic rights - which are supposed to apply across Europe - the same importance as EU economic and fiscal rules.

Follow link to [ETUC statement on the Social Pillar](#).

The European Commission is expected to release a white paper of the Pillar of Social Rights in March. The European Parliament adopted [ambitious proposals](#) that would bring Social Europe forward.

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