



12 November 2020

Following the Council Conclusions on Minimum Income, it is time for the European Commission to respond with courage and propose a legally binding EU framework for Minimum Income

Before the coronavirus crisis, one in five people were at risk of poverty and social exclusion. That is nearly 110 million people without enough money to make ends meet and to live a dignified life. This failure to meet the Europe 2020 poverty target threatens the credibility of Social Europe, with millions more expected to be dragged into poverty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. **This is no time for business as usual.**

One of the best ways to prevent people being dragged into poverty is to build individual and societal resilience – and **strong social protection systems** are the cornerstone of such resilience. In this context, **adequate, accessible and enabling Minimum Income schemes have an essential role to play as an ultimate safety net.** The EU Council recognised this on 12 October, issuing Council Conclusions on [“Strengthening Minimum Income Protection to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond”](#). These Conclusions invite the Commission to **“initiate an update of the Union framework to effectively support and complement the policies of Member States on national minimum income protection”**.

This invitation is a recognition that EU soft policy mechanisms currently in place have had limited impact, failing to provide incomes at an adequate level to respect the rights and dignity of millions of people. Only two Member States currently pay benefits close to the poverty threshold, while schemes in many countries barely reach 20% of the threshold. **This is no time for business as usual.**

We add our voices to the Council’s invitation. We know from our work that the lack of **adequate, accessible and enabling minimum incomes is a key priority for people experiencing poverty throughout Europe.** These Council Conclusions are the long-awaited springboard to move forward on a **legally binding Framework Directive on Minimum Income**, which would guarantee everyone’s right to an adequate minimum income and enable their full participation in society across the whole life span. **We call on the European Commission, and specifically Commissioner Schmit, to respond to the Conclusions by making an ambitious proposal for an EU Framework Directive to guarantee an adequate, accessible, and enabling Minimum Income.**

This proposal would be one of the key EU initiatives in the upcoming Action Plan to implement the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, due to be launched early in 2021. It is a proposal which could **reunite the EU Member States around a shared political and moral commitment to end poverty and social exclusion**, to a Europe that promotes decent living, decent working conditions and social rights. It is a proposal which could help restore faith in the European project. It is a proposal which is legally and politically feasible, building on existing EU competencies in the social and cohesion policy fields, fully respecting principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and thus protecting national competencies.

The EU must find ways to ensure that the Social Pillar has a real impact on people’s lives. **A Framework Directive on Minimum Income would be remembered as the new Commission’s flagship initiative that** guarantees a right to an adequate income to the people in the poorest and most vulnerable situations, demonstrating to all that the EU delivers on its promises and prioritises protecting people as well as planet, in its commitment to a social, inclusive and sustainable recovery.

Further Resources

Caritas Europa: [Position on Minimum Income](#)

EAPN: [Position paper on minimum income \(summary\)](#), [Expert study on a binding EU framework for adequate national minimum income schemes](#), [Op Ed on Minimum Income](#), [2020 national Poverty Watch reports](#)

ETUC: [Resolution on Minimum Income](#), [Discussion paper on Minimum Income](#), [Action programme for welfare and social protection](#)

Eurodiaconia: [Adequate Minimum Income – Recommendations For An Active Inclusion Strategy](#)

Social Platform: [Position on a Framework Directive for Minimum Income](#)

Supported by the following European level civil society organisations

No	Organisation
1	AGE Platform Europe
2	ATD Forth World
3	CEDAG
4	Civil Society Europe
5	ECDN European Consumer Debt Network
6	EFFAT
7	Emmaus Europe
8	ENSIE
9	ESAN
10	European Disability Forum
11	European Federation of Older Persons, EURAG
12	European federation of public service unions (EPSU)
13	European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
14	European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network
15	European Womens Lobby
16	European Youth Forum
17	Friends of the Earth Europe
18	International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW Europe)
19	Make Mothers Matter
20	Mental Health Europe
21	Observatoire social européen (OSE)
22	SMES-Europa Mental Health and Social Exclusion
23	SOLIDAR
24	The Good Lobby
25	The Salvation Army, Europe
26	Transgender Europe
27	Volonteuropé
28	WeMove Europe

Supported by the following Members of the European Parliament

No	MEP	Political Group
1	Cindy Franssen	EPP
2	Dennis Radtke	EPP
3	Benoit Biteau	Greens
4	Bricmont Saskia	Greens
5	Caroline Roose	Greens
6	Ciarán Cuffe	Greens
7	Claude Gruffat	Greens
8	Damien Carême	Greens
9	Daniel Freund	Greens
10	David Cormand	Greens
11	Diana Riba i Giner	Greens
12	Ernest Urtasun	Greens
13	Grace O'Sullivan	Greens
14	Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield	Greens
15	Karima Delli	Greens
16	Katrin Langensiepen	Greens
17	Kira Marie Peter-Hansen	Greens
18	Marie Toussaint	Greens
19	Michael Bloss	Greens
20	Mounir Satouri	Greens
21	Romeo Franz	Greens
22	Sara Matthieu	Greens
23	Salima Yenbou	Greens
24	Tatjana Zdanoka	Greens
25	Terry Reintke	Greens
26	Yannick Jadot	Greens
27	Alexis Georgoulis	GUE
28	Clare Daly	GUE
29	José Gusmão	GUE
30	Leïla Chaïbi	GUE
31	Marc Botenga	GUE
32	María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop	GUE
33	Marisa Matias	GUE
34	Agnes Jongerius	S+D
35	Alicia Homs Ginel	S+D
36	Brando Benifei	S+D
37	César Luena	S+D
38	Elisabetta Gualmini	S+D
39	Estrella Dura Ferrandis	S+D
40	Gabriele Bischoff	S+D
41	Juozas Olekas	S+D
42	Manuel Pizarro	S+D
43	Marc Angel	S+D
44	Miapetra Kumpula-Natri	S+D
45	Pierfrancesco Majorino	S+D

Supported by the following academics

No	Academic	Institution
1	Kristel Driessens	Bind-Kracht (Master of social work)
2	Anne Van Lancker	Consultant European Social Policy
3	Dubois Jean-Luc	French Research Institute for Development (retired Emeritus Research Professor)
4	Lena Schulz	Institut Goettingen e.V. (Sociological Research)
5	Mahmood Messkoub	International Institute of Social Studies (Erasmus University of Rotterdam), The Hague, NL.
6	Corveleyn Jozef	KU Leuven
7	Idesbald Nicaise	KU Leuven (HIVA)
8	Dr Jeremy Leaman	Loughborough University (Emeritus)
9	Ann-Christine Hartzén	Lund University
10	Mary Murphy	Maynooth University
11	Prof. Dr. Benjamin Benz	Protestant University of Applied Sciences Rhineland-Westphalia-Lippe, Bochum (Germany)
12	René Lehweß-Litzmann	Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Göttingen (SOFI)
13	Rüdiger Mautz	Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Göttingen (SOFI)
14	Dock	UCLouvain-Fopes
15	Françoise BARTIAUX	UCLouvain, Belgium
16	Michel Vandebroeck	UGent
17	Luis Ayala	UNED
18	Carlos García-Serrano	Universidad de Alcalá
19	Sergio Tirado Herrero	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)
20	Philippe Bocquier	Université catholique de Louvain
21	Van der Linden Bruno	Université catholique de Louvain
22	Patrick Italiano	Université de Liège
23	Dijon	Université de Namur
24	Xavier May	Université Libre de Bruxelles
25	Bea Cantillon	University of Antwerp
26	Ane Aranguiz	University of Antwerp
27	Herwig Verschueren	University of Antwerp
28	Jill Coene	University of Antwerp
29	Julie Vinck	University of Antwerp (Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy)
30	Luc Goossens	University of Antwerp
31	Sigrid Leitner	University of Applied Sciences Cologne
32	Tim Goedemé	University of Oxford
33	Andrea Dischler	
34	Andrea Hense	
35	Elisabeth Buchner	
36	H. Noordegraaf	
37	Hugh Frazer	
38	Knut Tullius	
39	Luca Ratti	
40	Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kädtler	
41	Tess Penne	
42	Ortrud Leßmann	

Also supported by Oliver Ropke, President of the EESC Workers' Group