

To the EPSCO Council Ministers

Make the European Pillar of Social Rights real – Adopt a meaningful general approach for the Work-Life Balance and Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directives

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you in view of the discussions taking place in EPSCO on 21st June, on the Commission's proposals for two Directives aimed at achieving the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, recently proclaimed by all Member States.

Both Directives are crucial to working people across Europe and their trade unions. We kindly ask you in your discussions at the next EPSCO meeting not to further dilute the proposals of the Commission and adopt a meaningful general approach for both texts.

The existing EU legal and institutional framework fails to sufficiently address challenges faced by its citizens and does not provide adequate solutions for the needs of modern societies. The proposed Directives include 1) provisions for improving equal sharing of work and care between women and men, by introducing minimum standards for paid paternity leave, paid parental leave, carers' leave and flexible working arrangements for parents and carers and 2) provisions to improve working conditions by promoting more secure and predictable employment.

All EU Heads of State and Governments, together with the EU Institutions, proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights in Gothenburg in November 2017 and these Directives are the first concrete deliverables that would transform the principles of the Pillar into reality, providing concrete improvements to the living and working lives of millions of workers.

More than a year after its publication and one year from the 2019 European elections, it is now time to take responsibility and ensure that citizens recover trust in the European project and its social dimension.

Some points are particularly relevant for the ETUC.

With respect to the **Directive on Work-Life Balance**, the general approach should maintain an adequate payment of all leave arrangements proposed and non-transferability of parental leave should be ensured, as well as the right to request flexible working conditions and adequate protections of workers against dismissal.

Concerning the draft **Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions** the coverage must be the broadest possible. There should be no stepping back on the CJEU definition of worker. This Directive must apply to the private and the public sector alike and it needs to be future-proof and cover workers in different forms of work, as well the most precarious. These are exactly the categories who should receive protection through this proposal and should not be exempted from it.

We need to communicate that the reported new social direction for Europe is real and that the European Pillar of Social rights will materialise in tangible rights for the workers in Europe in these two Directives. We stress the need for swift action in the direction of protecting workers. Thank you in advance for taking these points into consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luca Visentini', with a stylized, cursive script.

Luca Visentini
ETUC General Secretary