

# Consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

Welcome to the European Commission's online public consultation on the "European Pillar of Social Rights".

Are our social rights fit for the 21st century? The Pillar will identify a number of essential principles to address the challenges in the field of employment and social policies.

We want to involve everyone in shaping the European Pillar of Social Rights. We welcome contributions from citizens, social partners, organisations and public authorities, so have your say!

Please submit your contribution below until the end of 2016.

## I. Questions for the identification of the respondent

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**\* Are you replying as an individual or as an organisation?**

- Individual
- Organisation

**What is the type of your organisation?**

- Business
- EU level organisation
- National level organisation

**Your EU level organisation is a(n)**

- NGO
- Trade Union
- Employers organisation
- Think tank/academia
- Other

Please specify:

*500 character(s) maximum*

ACP Young Professionals Network

**\* Name of your organisation or institution:**

*500 character(s) maximum*

ACP Young Professionals Network

**\* Respondent's first name:**

Celine

**\* Respondent's surname:**

Fabrequette

**\* Respondent's email address:**

acpyn@gmail.com

**\* Postal address of your organisation or institution:**

*500 character(s) maximum*

3c rue du Beau site, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

**Country**

For individuals: country of residence.

For organisations: country where the organisation is based or country where the organisation's headquarters are.

Belgium

**Register ID number (if you/your organisation is registered in the Transparency register):**

If you would like to register, please refer to the following webpage to see how to proceed : <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/homePage.do>

\* **Your reply:**

- Can be published with your personal information** (I consent to publication of all information in my contribution and I declare that none of it is under copyright restrictions that prevent publication)
- Can be published in an anonymous way** (I consent to publication of all information in my contribution except my name/the name of my organisation and I declare that none of it is under copyright restrictions that prevent publication)
- Cannot be published - keep it confidential** (The contribution will not be published, but will be used internally within the Commission)

## II. Questions for the consultation

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The Commission invites all interested parties to reply to the questions set out in the questionnaire below, together with any additional comments, by 31 December 2016. (*See also [Commission communication "Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights", COM\(2016\) 127 final](#)*)

### On the social situation and EU social "acquis"

## 1. What do you see as most pressing employment and social priorities?

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With regards to the current economic and social situation, the most pressing employment and social priorities from the ACP YPN perspective are: (i) social cohesion; (ii) youth employment & (iii) youth political engagement. Firstly, it is important to re-establish social cohesion by reducing inequality of opportunities and investing in diversity. Since the 2007 economic crisis, opportunities for youth have diminished and skills are mismatched between the education systems, the current job market and future needs. Second, to tackle the issues of youth unemployment, unpaid internships should be banned in the EU. The EU also needs to take concrete steps to value youth work. Additionally, for the EU to become a leader in innovation and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) it is important to boost entrepreneurship among EU youth, including diaspora youth in the EU. To this end, the EU should establish a European one-stop-shop platform for young entrepreneurs to serve as a portal for entrepreneurs to know their rights, obligations and financial opportunities at local, national, European and international levels, across the public and private sector. In addition to this, and linked to the EU's challenges relating to its ageing population, the EU urgently needs to improve the Blue Card Directive to facilitate the ability of skilled workers with qualifications to seek and find employment in the EU. This will improve and facilitate exchange programmes between countries with which the EU has trade agreements, such as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Corollary to this issue is the recognition of diplomas and educational certification between EU and ACP countries. Thirdly, the EU needs to take efforts to increase youth political engagement. The UN's 'not too young to run' campaign is a good initiative, which can serve as an example. The European Commission can make better use of 'youth ambassadors' to champion youth's political engagement.

## 2. How can we account for different employment and social situations across Europe?

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To account for the different level of employment and social conditions across Europe, the EU must:

- 1) Conduct a disaggregated study of the employment market, which shows the status of different minority & vulnerable groups. Such a study would provide a mapping of the employment difficulties (including entering the job market, creating a business, access to finance...etc) and conditions in which these groups are evolving;
- 2) Review the real impact of the funds used from the ESF toward apprenticeships, women's employability, and social and diversity integration;
- 3) Support universities and member states to develop programmes in collaboration with employers in the job market, in order to ensure better transition between education to the job market
- 4) Review the Erasmus programme , not merely the disbursements of funds but more precisely the effective implementation of the programme at the university level. The first "raison d'être" of the Erasmus programme seem to have changed.
- 5) Continue to extend and reinforce access to the Erasmus programme to young people with non-formal education and youth in apprenticeships, and ensure that EU youth of diverse backgrounds benefit adequately from the programme.
- 6) Ensure that the Youth Guarantee fund & programme is not being overused and distorted by employers. A limit in the number of "interns" or apprentice per employer must be put in place.
- 7) Ensure that Erasmus+ fosters circular migration of youth, which can help put migration in a positive light.
- 8) Allocate ACP scholarships to the College of Europe from Erasmus+.

### 3. Is the EU "acquis" up to date and do you see scope for further EU action?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The social acquis already has many tools in place to improve employment opportunity for workers and raise their standards of living, but there are some areas in which the EU can improve as the economy develops and modernizes. Regarding the social protection of youth workers, the EU should work to increase the minimum requirements. Through Art 9 TFEU, the EU has the obligation to fight social exclusion through social mainstreaming. This must be revised based on the fact that 'atypical' contracts tend to predominantly affect youth, women, migrants and minority groups and therefore constitutes discrimination.

Today's employment market features an increasing amount of 'atypical' contracts which were intended to create flexibility in the economy and spur growth but instead have made it more difficult to secure long-term employment for an extended period of time. Observable trends point to the fact that these posts are predominantly taken up by women and youth. Additionally, often these types of contracts are not aligned with the ability to build up social rights (pension, unemployment benefits, etc.) or on-the-job training to enhance skills. Additionally, migrants face "dramatic downgrading and slow occupational recovery during the first decade of working in Europe" (ECDPM, 2016).

The changing structure of employment and skills required by employers must also be better matched with skills taught through the expansion of education. Due to the hollowing out of intermediary and entry level jobs, (young) people with less experience are losing the opportunity to enter into the job market - and finding opportunities to progress beyond entry-level jobs. To ensure better job security and job placement for at-risk groups the EU can enhance employability skills through educational, vocational and apprenticeship policy or publicly funded programs; plus employers need to offer essential skills training to their employees - including those with atypical contracts.

**On the future of work and welfare systems**

**4. What trends would you see as most transformative? [Please select at most three from the list below]**

*between 1 and 3 choices*

- Demographic trends (e.g. ageing, migration)
- Changes in family structures
- New skills requirements
- Technological change
- Increasing global competition
- Participation of women in the labour market
- New ways of work
- Inequalities
- Other

**5. What would be the main risks and opportunities linked to such trends?**

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The SDGs offer new opportunities. However, we face the challenges of adapting to new globalised economies and digitalisation - these must be seen as opportunities to harness the SDGs. As the SDGs are universal, the EU must learn from the example of others, such as the ACP countries. For example, Tuvalu have been taking pro-active steps towards tackling climate change and involving their Youth into the elaboration and development of prevention measures and awareness campaigns. Currently some European countries are faced with the inability to keep up with technological changes and to develop appropriate legislation to monitor those new forms of economy without impeding in their economic and social development (Uber, Airbnb, Deliveroo etc..).

Discrimination against youth, women or persons of ethnic minorities in employment is often due to the problem of unconscious bias and attitudes towards these groups in the employment market. In addition, persons in 'atypical' contracts often do not have access to skills training programs on the job. Ensuring EU-wide minimum requirements for social protection of 'atypical' contract workers would most likely substantially reduce the abusive use of these types of contracts, while at the same time reducing social insecurity. Providing for a better minimum protection for self-employed persons would increase the level of innovation as fewer people would be deterred from starting their own companies - companies which in the end can also provide more jobs, social and economic services to society.

Migrant workers face higher barriers to enter the job market, worsening the feared impact of becoming a financial burden on society. Improving the Blue Card Directive can enhance market access for skilled and qualified migrant especially young migrants. This can increase the financial autonomy of migrants, assist with their integration and increase the 'innovation' potential in the relevant sectors that are most responsive.

**6. Are there policies, institutions or firm practices – existing or emerging – which you would recommend as references?**

*2000 character(s) maximum*

ACP YPN has developed and led a number of initiatives to foster young people's integration in the EU and in particular, EU and ACP diaspora youth engagement at the national, EU & ACP levels: (i) the ACP YPN's 'ACP Ambassador's Roundtable Series' develops dialogues between ACP ambassadors and senior officials with their nationals and diaspora in Brussels and the EU at large; (ii) ACP YPN has offered a number of free training sessions, on obtaining an EU traineeship, CV skills, 'networking' amongst others, to help increase EU youth of ACP origin and ACP Youth employability, engagement and awareness at the EU; (iii) ACP YPN took the first delegations of ACP youth to the European Youth Event (EYE2016), where its founder was recognised as an ambassador for diversity by the EP VP Mairead McGuinness, and three delegates were later chosen to share their ideas with the EP Committees (INTA, ITRE and LIBE); (iv) ACP YPN took the first ever delegation of ACP youth to the European Development Days (EDD), where ACP YPN partnered with ONE Campaign to champion the issue of youth in health and nutrition, and with UNDP and the Committee of the Regions to champion the debate on youth and SDGs; (v) ACP YPN pioneered the establishment of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly's Youth Forum, which has held two sessions in Windhoek, Namibia and Nairobi, Kenya. There are a number of additional on-going activities, which can be seen via [www.acpypn.com](http://www.acpypn.com). See also the excellent work of (i) Les Déterminés - an association whose goal is the democratization of youth entrepreneurship, particularly in working-class neighbourhoods; (ii) The Digital Leadership Institute - which runs a number of free trainings, including most recently the incubator program "Move it Forward for Women Refugees - Female Digital Starters Weekend" ; (iii) European Code week - which included workshops and events across Europe - targeting all demographics - in order to introduce them to the digital skills necessary for today

## On the European Pillar of Social Rights

**7. Do you agree with the approach outlined here for the establishment of a European Pillar of Social Rights?**

- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I disagree
- I strongly disagree

Please specify:

*2000 character(s) maximum*

**8. Do you agree with the scope of the Pillar, domains and principles proposed here?** *(If you wish to provide detailed comments on any of the 20 domains, please see the section "Detailed comments by domain" below)*

	I strongly agree	I agree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
1. Skills, education and life-long learning	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Flexible and secure labour contracts	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Secure professional transitions	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Active support for employment	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Gender equality and work-life balance	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Equal opportunities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Conditions of employment	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Wages	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Health and safety at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Social dialogue and involvement of workers	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Integrated social benefits and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Health care and sickness benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Pensions	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Unemployment benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Minimum income	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Disability benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Long-term care	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Access to essential services	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Are there aspects which are not adequately expressed or covered so far?**

*2000 character(s) maximum*

**9. What domains and principles would be most important as part of a renewed convergence for the euro area? (Please select maximum 5)**

*between 1 and 5 choices*

- 1. Skills, education and life-long learning
- 2. Flexible and secure labour contracts
- 3. Secure professional transitions
- 4. Active support for employment
- 5. Gender equality and work-life balance
- 6. Equal opportunities
- 7. Conditions of employment
- 8. Wages
- 9. Health and safety at work
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- 11. Integrated social benefits and services
- 12. Health care and sickness benefits
- 13. Pensions
- 14. Unemployment benefits
- 15. Minimum income
- 16. Disability benefits
- 17. Long-term care
- 18. Childcare
- 19. Housing
- 20. Access to essential services

*Comments:*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

**10. How should these be expressed and made operational? In particular, do you see the scope and added value of minimum standards or reference benchmarks in certain areas and if so, which ones?**

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The Pillar should indeed become a reference framework to screen the employment and social performance of participating Member States in the European Semester.

The EU must champion youth mainstreaming (along the same lines as gender-mainstreaming - see ACP YPN's advocacy on the issue). Youth must be included in all stages of decisions making, implementation and review of policies. This requires active consultation of youth organizations, which adequately represent the diversity of different youth groups. These groups can provide opinions on social integration and the youth status quo at national level. Moreover, as the EP VP Mairead McGuinness recognised that the EU does need an 'ambassador for diversity' - this must be put in place in order to monitor the social inclusion and diversity progress in EU policies.

**Detailed comments by domain**

If you wish to provide detailed comments on any of the domains, please select one or more from the list below and fill the table(s) and comment box(es) underneath. *(A detailed description of the domains and principles is available in the [Annex "A European Pillar of Social Rights - Preliminary Outline"](#) to the [Commission communication "Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights"](#), COM(2016) 127 final).*

- 1. Skills, education and life-long learning
- 2. Flexible and secure labour contracts
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## Contact

EMPL-EUROPEAN-PILLAR-OF-SOCIAL-RIGHTS@ec.europa.eu

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