

PES ministers say time has come to put social Europe first

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Communiqué de presse

PES ministers will not give up their fight for a Europe that puts people first, for a Europe that puts fundamental social rights and social progress above economic freedoms and competition laws.

This is the conclusion of the PES Employment and Social Affairs ministers, who met in Luxembourg today, ahead of the council of ministers of the EU28.

PES ministers discussed their vision for actions that will bring social policies to the centre of the European project. They particularly focused on the need to proclaim the Pillar of Social Rights, which is based on many existing rights, and on the importance of backing it up with a Social Action Plan containing concrete measures to put the pillar into action.

The ministers also called for a fair revision of the Directive on Posting of Workers, following recent valuable progress on the issue in the European Parliament.

Luxembourgish Minister Nicolas Schmit, Chairperson of the PES Social and Employment Ministers Network, said:

"Tomorrow's council meeting is a very important meeting. It is crucial that we send a strong message. For our citizens to feel they can rely on Europe, it needs to be a Europe that protects and puts their well-being at the centre of the agenda. This is why it is crucial that a strong Pillar of Social Rights be proclaimed.

"But there also needs to be a Social Action Plan that turns the principles into concrete measures, clearly improving people's daily lives.

"For the same reason, we are determined that this Council meeting should take a strong stance in favour of a fair revision of the rules on posting of workers. Europe will only be able to maintain people's trust if it shows clear willingness to progress on these issues."

Pervenche Berès, Chair of the PES Social Europe Network, said:

"The Social Summit in Gothenburg on 17 November will be a vital moment and a very important opportunity for pushing for a truly social Europe. Progress must be made on all of these issues in the month before the summit if its full potential is to be realised.

"We are committed to working towards this aim over the next month, and we call on everyone else to live up to the same responsibilities. In parallel, we will continue the fight on the ground to ensure social Europe is a reality in all EU countries."

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Nicolas Schmit, Minister for Labour, Employment, Social and Solidarity Economy, Chairperson, Luxembourg
- Jevgeni Ossinovski, Minister for Health and Labour and Party Leader, Estonia
- Katarina Barley, Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany
- Thorben Albrecht, State Secretary in the Employment and Social Affairs Ministry, Germany
- Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment, Malta
- José António Vieira da Silva, Minister of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security, Portugal
- Jan Richter, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Slovakia
- Ylva Johansson, Minister for Employment, Sweden
- Effie Achtsioglou, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, Greece (Observer)
- Rania Antonopoulou, Alternate Minister for Combating Unemployment, Greece (Observer)
- Maria João Rodrigues, Vice-President of the S&D Group in the European Parliament
- Agnes Jongerius, Vice-Chair EMPL Committee, S&D Group in the European Parliament
- Luca Visentini, ETUC Secretary General
- Esther Lynch, ETUC Confederal
- Pervenche Berès, Chair of the PES Social Europe Network
- Yonnec Polet, PES Deputy Secretary General