

## **PES EPSCO Minister: time for the EU to show its social engagement**

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Nicolas Schmit, Minister for Labour, Employment, Social and Solidarity Economy, Chair, Luxembourg, and Pervenche Berès, Chair of PES Social Europe Network

PES Employment and Social Affairs Ministers met on 5 December and outlined their priorities for a more social Europe, ahead of the EPSCO Council.

The proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights a year ago made the ambitions of the EU in the social field clear. The PES has insisted that a [Social Action Plan](#) is needed to deliver on the promises made.

With the proposed directive on working conditions, the European Labour Authority, and the Directive on Work Life Balance there are proposals on the table to turn some of the Pillar's principles into law. With these three files, on protection of all workers, on fair implementation of workers mobility rules and on gender gaps on the labour market, it is social inequalities that are at stake. Their adoption would mean a great step forward and would show the EU's commitment to the Pillar in earnest.

Yet, **Minister Nicolas Schmit**, Chairman of PES EPSCO network, made clear that more needs to be done on the path of social Europe:

"The 2019 European elections will take place in a few months and we will use this momentum to make the fight against inequality a priority for the EU.

"The high levels of inequality which we are facing are not automatic or inevitable. They are the result of political choices that shape policies and guide our economies. It is a matter of where we put our priorities.

"Take child poverty for example. In the EU, today, more than 1 out of 4 children lives at risks or poverty or social exclusion. This is simply unacceptable, and something must be done about it. Our political family has been promoting a European Child Guarantee to ensure children's rights to healthcare, education, childcare, housing and nutrition. The idea is taking shape, with the public support of our parties, our ministers, and the work of our S&D colleagues in the European Parliament who have successfully pushed for dedicated funds in the next European budget. We want to push the EU to stand up for the most vulnerable in our societies."

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