

Minimum wages vote in plenary: a bad day for social partner autonomy

The European Parliament has adopted the EMPL report as basis for the trilogue negotiations. What could have been a good day for social partners and capacity building across the EU, ends up in a weakening of collective bargaining. Employers and various national trade unions have repeatedly insisted that decisions involving wage setting and collective bargaining must be taken at national level.

Brussels, 26 November 2021 – Against the recommendation of employers' organisations and of various national trade unions, the MEPs have passed during a plenary vote the minimum wages report as voted in the EMPL committee.

The report, which is now the Parliament's position to start the trilogue negotiations with Commission and Council, turns a blind eye on the impact the proposed Directive has on collective bargaining.

Mindless weakening of collective bargaining

The Directive deals with a sensitive topic which at least touches – but in practice interferes with – national and social partners competences.

The outcome of the Parliament vote neglects the proposal's negative consequences for collective bargaining. This comes as a surprise considering that employers have again and again underlined that the proposal heavily impacts one of the most important instruments of social partners.

Setting an arbitrary target for collective bargaining coverage, and obliging Member States to interfere if the coverage is below this threshold, will likely result in the end of well-functioning collective bargaining systems. This interference goes against social partner autonomy and will weaken what the Directive sets out to strengthen.

Negative backlash for the European project

The proposed Directive cannot deliver on what it makes citizens believe it can do. Wages across the EU and sectors will not automatically rise and improve the situation of workers because of the Directive. A strong social partnership in a thriving economy can.

Ceemet Director General Delphine Rudelli warns: *“Many citizens will wake up disappointed when they realise that their wages might not rise because of this Directive. The result will be a surge of anti-European feelings putting the European project at risk.”*

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About Ceemet

Ceemet represents the metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers in Europe, covering sectors such as metal goods, mechanical engineering, electronics, ICT, vehicle and transport manufacturing.

Member organisations represent 200,000 companies in Europe, providing over 17 million direct and 35 million indirect jobs.

Ceemet is a recognised European social partner at the industrial sector level, promoting global competitiveness for European industry through consultation and social dialogue.