

Members of the European Parliament
Employment and Social Affairs Committee
Rue Wiertz 60
1050 Brussels

Joint messages of 8 European sectoral employers on the draft motion for a resolution on strengthening social dialogue

27 March 2023

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

As European sectoral employers' organisations, we are strongly involved and committed to a constructive sectoral social dialogue at the European and national level. Therefore, we would like to provide joint input on the draft Motion for a Resolution currently discussed in the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee. We are focusing on the following key messages:

1. Sectoral social dialogue and collective bargaining are essential in our sectors and a key aspect of the European social model and social market economy to manage change and ensure competitive, resilient and inclusive labour markets.
2. The autonomy of social partners must be fully ensured when carrying out their work, from conducting sectoral social dialogue to negotiating agreements and/or joint statements.
3. Member States should, after consultation and in close cooperation with social partners, strive to strengthen collective bargaining at national, sectoral and company levels focusing on capacity building while respecting social partner autonomy and the different national collective bargaining systems and traditions. As part of this approach, there should be a clear distinction made between capacity-building support for social partners and other NGOs. This point should be taken up in the discussions on the Common Provisions Regulation and ESF+ regulation for the next financial period.
4. European sectoral employers' organisations (and trade unions) already expressed serious concerns about the proposed alternative approach to the organisation of Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees, especially about the idea of multi-annual "project-based" financing, which could endanger both the autonomy of social partners and their capacity to come up with meaningful outcomes. The lack of

security and predictability of financing could also threaten the existence of some committees.

5. National policy makers in close cooperation and consultation of social partners should endeavour to achieve a higher collective bargaining coverage since it has been clearly shown that countries with strong social partnership and higher prevalence of collective bargaining tend to have more resilient labour markets, lower levels of unemployment and lower levels of low paid workers. Nevertheless, we strongly oppose the definition of a European target for collective bargaining coverage at 90% by 2030 (para. 7). Setting this target not only clearly violates the autonomy of social partners and opens the door for political interference in wage-setting across Europe but also goes well beyond what has already been agreed among the European institutions with the Adequate Minimum Wage Directive.
6. In many EU countries, social partners can deviate from collective agreements concluded at a higher level according to national rules. Therefore, limiting derogations from collective agreements concluded at a higher level to certain situations constitutes an interference in the social partners' autonomy.
7. Consultation with social partners on economic, social and employment policies is essential. At the same time, it is equally important that the recommendations and positions are effectively taken into account when designing EU policies.
8. The role of new and diverse forms of work in enabling dynamic, inclusive and resilient labour markets must be fully and better recognised. As European Sectoral social partners, we aim to recall that some diverse forms of work, such as part-time work, fixed-term contracts and temporary agency work, are already adequately covered by social dialogue and collective labour agreements.
9. EU Member States must transpose the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in a way that fully recognises and respects national collective bargaining practices and the autonomy of social partners in setting minimum wages in collective labour agreements.
10. The European Commission should refrain from proposing new legislation in the field of information and consultation of workers. Introducing new legislation will place an additional burden on companies, in particular on SMEs, and will thus hinder their competitiveness and ability to innovate and provide quality jobs. Instead, we should focus efforts on improving the implementation of existing legislation at the national level. This includes the 2009 European Works Council Directive, which we consider appropriate in its current form.
11. The European Commission must fully respect agreements between European social partners both at the cross-industry and sectoral level as well as the implementation of social partner agreements in accordance with the provisions of the treaty.
12. Any consideration concerning the revision of the Public Procurement rules must be based on a comprehensive approach, balancing the attention to the social dimension with the necessity to ensure that conditions of public contracts can be adapted to adjust to external shocks in order to guarantee the profitability and durability of economic activity.

European sectoral employers strongly call for these recommendations to be fully considered when finalising and adopting the motion for a resolution.

Yours faithfully



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Director General



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