



European Trade Union
Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération
européenne des
syndicats (CES)



The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe



European Centre of
Employers and Enterprises
providing Public services

Mr Johannes Hahn
Commissioner, Regional Policy

Mr László Andor
Commissioner, Employment, Social
Affairs and Inclusion

European Commission
B- 1049 Brussels

12 October 2012

Dear Commissioners,

In October 2011, the European Commission published a proposal for a regulation, revised in September 2012, laying down common provisions for European cohesion for the period 2014-2020.

Article 5 of the Common Provision Regulation enshrined the principle of involvement of economic and social partners as part of the “partnership principle”. Furthermore on 24 April 2012, the European Commission published a staff working document outlining elements for a European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP). With a view to adopting the Common Provision Regulation, the Council, the European Parliament and Commission entered into a negotiation as part of a trilogue process.

In line with what the Commission proposed in Article 5, European social partners jointly support the Partnership Principle which foresees the close involvement of national economic and social partners by Member States *“in the preparation of Partnership Contracts and progress reports, and in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes”*.

For this reason, we disagree with the Council’s decision to limit the partnership and multilevel governance and to reject the Code of conduct proposed in Article 5.

In addition, in line with the European Parliament proposal to reinforce the partnership between the national and the regional and local authorities, we consider it essential to ensure a close and systematic involvement of economic and social partners at all levels of partnership.

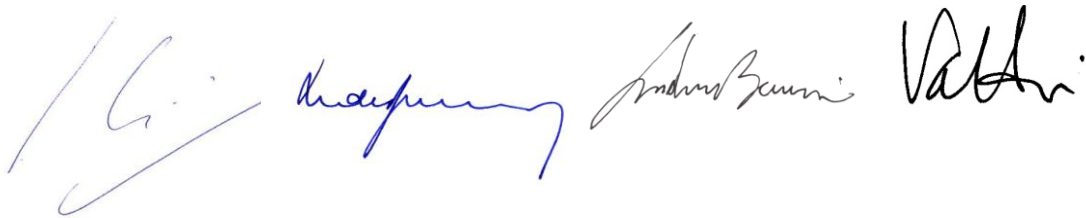
As recognised by the Commission, **we insist on the distinctive nature of economic and social partners.** Economic and social partners have a deep and wide view of the needs of society, enterprises and workers. Furthermore, our difference from other potential partners, such as civil society actors comes from our ability to take part in collective bargaining and thus frame economic and social development in the Member States. **Therefore, we call for a specific treatment of economic and social partners in the Partnership Principle as it is proposed for regional and local authorities.**

More specifically, we would also like to draw your attention to a letter we sent earlier this spring to Members of relevant committees in the European Parliament as part of their reading of the draft European Social Fund regulation for 2014-2020 – see attached.

We thank you for your attention and hope that you will take into account our requests in the trilogue negotiations.

We remain at your disposal for any further clarification or discussion.

Yours sincerely,



ETUC	BUSINESSEUROPE	UEAPME	CEEP
Bernadette Ségol General Secretary	Philippe de Buck Director General	Andrea Benassi Secretary General	Valeria Ronzitti General Secretary